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Your Excellencies Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Guests:

Terrorism is a faceless and an invisible enemy. Its aggression is outrageously inhumane.

Terrorists aim at being armed with various mass media to promote their purposes and goals. They employ the media to mislead security agencies and control public opinion through the dissemination of news, visual and social media covering the terrorist operations they perpetrate and deem that media propaganda contribute to achieving their terrorists' goals. Terrorists perceive media coverage of their crimes as an imperative criterion of success for their terrorist acts to an extent that some consider that a terrorist act that is not accompanied with media coverage is a failed operation.

Hence, terrorism's exploitation of the media emerges to promote and support its terrorist ideology through its relentless attempts to find a corresponding media propaganda to place its existence and purposes under the spotlight. Terrorists may **refrain** from carrying out their operations if they are pre-informed that these operations

shall not be accompanied by media propaganda and coverage that reveals the sheer size of the loss inflicted upon their enemies. This psychological war is used solely to terrorize people. This media propaganda acts as a free advertisement and the oxygen that terrorism cannot survive without, covering terrorist acts that reaps tactical and strategic benefits for its perpetrators.

Furthermore, terrorism is an attractive gain for mass media agencies because viewer ratings of terrorist attacks cause media enterprises' profits to soar, due to the elements of drama, suspense, blood, human tragedy and atrocious scenes, all of which have become an important part for the cinematography and high financial thrust for media enterprises.

Terrorism has become a regional and an international challenge. It is self-evident with the failure of security and military approaches to contain, curb and eradicate terrorism. Consequently, the focus has turned on the importance of the media dimension and the crucial need to galvanize the role of mass media in response to this imminent menace due to its widespread impact and influence on people's minds, ideas and convictions. Thus, we ought to focus our attention on media intervention to confront and eradicate ideological extremism, which fuels terrorism and prevent the greater harm of influencing

public opinion, in particular Youth. Immediate media intervention is key to halt new bloodshed from pumping new blood into the heart of terrorism..

Terrorism is an international phenomenon that is not associated with religion, race or particular region and it is not merely limited to the Middle East region, but the world is also witnessing global terrorism . Therefore, it is important to stand firm against all attempts to affix the stereotype of terrorism to Arabs and Muslims.

The battle of the Media has and still remains to be a successful one. It has managed to depict Muslims as terrorists who want to kill all those who oppose them. It succeeded in creating the stereotype of Islamic terrorism threat labling it as a cliché -that attributes world atrocities and global g security threats to Islam. It managed to distort the image of the most peaceful religions. It succeeded on several levels, perhaps more than expected. Unfortunately, the fear of Islam or the so-called "Islamophobia" has increased due to actions perpetrated by a few who claim their affiliation to Islam. These criminal and terrorist acts in the name of Islam has put the holy Islam, Muslims and believers in a false light, antagonizing -Islam and Muslims worldwide.

Today, the term "terrorism" is only devised to describe violence and aggression perpetrated by Muslims, while

other terms have been coined to describe this aggression such as "Islamic extremism", "Islamic terrorism", and "Islamic violence", and "Islamophobia". Undoubtedly, the media has succeeded in portraying Muslims as aggressive people who follow the tenets of a religion that calls for violence.

The counter-terrorism intervention by the international community is absolutely indispensable, because the breadth of terrorism we are facing today goes beyond national borders. It is undeniable that the phenomenon of terrorism is a global one that cannot be countered only by national endeavors.

Terrorist networks have no specific home; their cells extend to encompass numerous countries across boundaries and continents. International cooperation has played a vital and effective role, which was not only limited to counter-terrorism criminalizing its acts and punishing its perpetrators, but also it has taken a holistic approach, which included identifying the root causes of terrorism and calling upon states to address those causes. Conversely, the international community has not ignored the fact that counter-terrorism may be used to restrict freedoms and violate human rights, paying close attention to the dichotomy of security and liberty.

**Terrorist organizations have succeeded in their exploitation of mass media, in particular social media, for the following reasons:**

**First,** social media channels are by far the most popular forums with targeted audiences worldwide, which allow terrorist organizations to be part of the mainstream,

**Second,** social media channels are easy to use, reliable and free.

**Third,** social media messages reaches masses of people at the same moment all around the globe at the speed of light,

**Fourth,** social media carries out its messages through immediate visual and psychological affects from autography, videography, photography, and cinematography,

**Fifth,** social media is the online assembly of people from all around the world surpassing languages and cultures where people have a voice, opinion through sharing their thoughts, likes and votes,

**Sixth,** social media is the means that transmits the messages and re-transmits it several time at the same moment multiplying the message

**Lastly,** social networks allow terrorists to simply and easily have access to targeted audience.

**We can say that mass media has contributed to implant violence and increase ideological extremism and terrorism - directly or indirectly – as follows:**

- The area of absolute freedom granted by International Information Network (Internet) for those who embrace these ideologies, to publish, promote and support these ideas, offering the opportunity to publish their statements, remarks, books, films and records across the world with unprecedented simplicity.
- Some mass media adopt a policy of exaggeration and dramatization to achieve media excitement and increase public interest for profit gain in light of the fierce competition.
- The news, images, even articles published by some newspapers and mass media foster this ideology even indirectly under the guise of wrong freedom.
- The dominance of the informational or news broadcasting in today's media coverage and the absence of the analytical media coverage, resulting in superficial coverage of events or phenomena, This move from “analytical news worthy” to “heresay headline news” further contributes to the terrorism's and extremism's influence on people's minds.

- Some mass media lack experts and specialists in security, social, psychological and educational fields to convince the targeted audience with the truth beyond events and not to drift away towards dramatization that causes, in most cases, counter implications. Moreover, it is important to focus on dealing with the terrorist phenomenon per se, not the terrorist act, and the need to turn from the focus on the details of terrorist operations and official and public reactions, to offering visions and outlooks that would help the reader or spectator to form an educated opinion.
- Some satellite channels broadcast tragic scenes and depict the damages in a repetitive and exaggerated manner, in addition to, broadcasting views of terrorists without giving the opportunity to refute their views or respond to their extreme and twisted views . These serious practices cause, in turn, a negative influence of the some which leads them to legitimize and favour terrorist acts. As such, several individuals involved in the terrorist act, when arrested in Iraq, stated that they were influenced by what was covered on a daily basis by some media channels which caused them to join organizations that incite bombings and suicide operations.

## **What can we do?**

It is important to confront the destructive information offered on the Internet and treat it with an immediate action by adopting legislations that ensure the closure of these sites that promote violence and extremist ideas; in particular, the sites that claim affiliation to Islam and provide a distorted image of Islam.

Pursuant to all General Assembly resolutions related to measures aiming to eradicate international terrorism, and in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution 2178 on Threats to International Peace and Security by Terrorist Acts published on September 24, 2014, in addition to General Assembly resolutions in relation to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in a counter-terrorism context

Despite the **United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy** adopted by member states on September 8, 2006 and an annexed Plan of Action, putting special emphasis on the role of media in responding to terrorism, and building a global and regional counter-terrorism legal framework and coordination of efforts in its collective response against all forms of terrorism broadcasted on the Internet; and the use of the Internet as a tool to combat the spread of terrorism, while taking into account that states may need assistance in this regard.



It is to be noted that approximately 90% of terrorist acts and activities on the internet is broadcasted through social media. Therefore, social media has become the most important weapon used by terrorists for recruitment, promotion, incitement and fund raising.

**Despite all the procedures adopted both at international and regional levels, it is important to thoroughly consider the role of social media in promoting terrorists, and blocking the oxygen source needed for the survival of these criminal groups and gangs through the following proposed actions:**

I. Adopt and implement an initiative endorsed by the League of Arab States to be presented before the United Nations General Assembly entitled " States' Counter-Terrorism Resolution on Combating Terrorism on Social Media". This resolution aims at drying up the sources of terrorism, by shutting down and prohibiting media outlets that broadcasts terrorist operations halting online publishing of videos or propaganda materials of terrorist groups, in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which stipulates the importance of individuals to enjoy rights and freedoms endorsed by this Declaration, relevant international conventions and legal and human rights instruments. That

in addition to the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted in 2006 which identified five key elements as its main pillars; namely: Dissuading people from resorting to terrorism or supporting it; denying terrorists the means to carry out an attack; deterring States from supporting terrorism; developing State capacity to defeat terrorism, and; defending human rights.

**II.** Reduce cyber crimes; in particular, informational terrorism. We propose today that the United Nations, through the "Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force" and "Counter-Terrorism Centre" establish different accounts on different social media that target youth and women with an aim to expose terrorist organizations by launching counter-terrorism dialogues and forums on social media networks.

**III.** Establish a media observatory at the United Nations Department of Public Information to monitor published material on social media networks by terrorist organizations and to draw regular analytical reports about this material, in addition to monitoring media coverage of the phenomenon of terrorism and drawing an analytical report about the pros and cons of media coverage of this phenomenon.