



## Addressing Terrorism at UNGA, 2017

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This section looks into the issue of terrorism addressed at the annual UNGA meeting at the UN Headquarter in New York. Table 1 below will focus on the statements made by the representative of the countries belonging to the P5 category, while Table 2 will highlight the issue of terrorism raised by India and its neighbours.

**Table 1**

Countries	Representative	Statement
United States	Donald J. Trump, President	Talking about the “ <b>growing danger</b> ”, President Trump said, “ <u>terrorists and extremists have gathered strength and spread to every region</u> of the planet. Rogue regimes represented in this body not only support terrorists but threaten other nations and their own people with the most destructive weapons known to

humanity.”

In a **reference to Iran**, Trump said, “Rather than use its resources to improve Iranian lives, its oil profits go to fund Hezbollah and other terrorists that kill innocent Muslims and attack their peaceful Arab and Israeli neighbours.”

Calling for an **international consensus against Iran**, Trump went on to say, “It is time for the entire world to join us in demanding that Iran's government end its pursuit of death and destruction. And above all, Iran's government must stop supporting terrorists, begin serving its own people, and respect the sovereign rights of its neighbours.”

**Comparing Iran with its regional neighbours**, particularly Saudi Arabia he said, “The Iranian regime’s support for terror is in stark contrast to the recent commitments of many of its neighbours to fight terrorism and halt its financing.”

On the issue of funding and safe havens,

		<p>President Trump said, “We must deny the terrorists safe haven, transit, funding, and any form of support for their vile and sinister ideology... It is time to expose and hold responsible those countries that support and finance terror groups like al Qaeda, Hezbollah, the Taliban and others.”</p> <p>Referring to <b>US engagement and the subsequent changes in conflict zones</b>, Trump said, “I have totally <u>changed the rules of engagement in our fight against the Taliban</u> and other terrorist groups. <u>In Syria and Iraq, we have made big gains toward lasting defeat of ISIS. In fact, our country has achieved more against ISIS in the last eight months than it has in many, many years combined.</u>”<sup>1</sup></p>
China	Wang Yi, Minister of Foreign Affairs	<p>The Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi said, “In fighting terrorism, we need a <b>holistic approach</b> that <u>addresses both symptoms and root causes</u>. We need to abide by law and <b>avoid applying double standards</b>. One must not associate terrorism with any particular ethnic group or religion. The UN needs to spearhead and coordinate efforts to build a global</p>

		united front against terrorism.” <sup>2</sup>
France	Emmanuel Macron, President	<p>French President Emmanuel Macron made a reference to <b>terrorism in the context of the ongoing Syrian crisis</b>. He said, “we must urgently concentrate on the <u>political resolution of the crisis</u>, through transition, as the <u>Security Council unanimously decided in Resolution 2254 in 2015</u>. He further said that in Syria and Iraq the biggest battle is against terrorism.</p> <p>Highlighting <b>France’s role in Syria and Iraq</b>, he said, “France is taking <u>military action</u> within the coalition in Syria and Iraq, within the rule of international law. <u>This fight against terrorism is a military fight, a diplomatic fight but also an educational, cultural and moral fight</u>.</p> <p><b>Internet and Funding:</b> In making security our first priority, Macron said, “This is what France is trying to achieve with its initiatives to <u>tackle the use of the Internet by terrorists and fight all their sources of funding</u>.”<sup>3</sup></p>
Russia	Sergey V. Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Putting nationalists on the same pedestal as terrorists and extremists, Russian

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey V. Lavrov said, “[they] destroy and desecrate the objects of historic, religious and cultural value.”

Referring to **“armed interventions” in Middle East and Northern Africa** and **installation of “unsuitable regimes”** in those regions, Lavrov said, “The outburst of international terrorism, millions of refugees, unprecedented flows of illegal migration are mainly rooted in the adventurous change of “unsuitable regimes” of the recent years, including armed interventions that brought havoc and destruction in the Middle East and Northern Africa and paved the way for terrorists in all the parts of the world where they have never been before.”

Referring to the foreign coalition partners involved in Syria, Foreign Minister Lavrov pointed out **US and its allies’ reluctance in fighting al Nusra that is equally dangerous as ISIL/Daesh.** In this context, he said, “Despite the fact that ISIL is pulling back in Syria and Iraq, considerable additional effort is required

		<p>to stabilize the region. It should be recalled that <u>it is necessary to fight not only ISIL, but also al-Nusra, the latter being tolerated for whatever reason by the US coalition members.</u></p> <p>In the larger fight against terrorism and extremism, as envisaged in the UN <b>Global Counter-terrorism Strategy</b>, he said, “Extremism and terrorism can only be fought jointly, <u>without double standards or hidden agendas, and relying on the main responsibility of States.</u>”<sup>4</sup></p>
United Kingdom	Theresa May, Prime Minister	<p>Focusing on the <b>percolation of extremist ideology and the multiplicity of challenges that it poses</b>, Prime Minister Theresa May in her opening remarks pointed out the reach of the internet. He said, “the increasing numbers being drawn to extremist ideologies not only in places riven by conflict and instability, but many online in their homes thousands of miles away from those conflicts.” She further added, “we must also step up our efforts as never before to tackle the terrorist use of the internet. For as the threat from terrorists evolves, so must our cooperation.”</p>

In context of “the terrorist use of the internet”, PM May said, “we must step up our efforts as never before to tackle the terrorist use of the internet.” She further added, “For as the threat from terrorists evolves, so must our cooperation. And that is why today, for the first time in the UN, governments and industry through the **Global Internet Forum for Counterterrorism** will be coming together to do just that.”

**Military engagement:** Showing her resolve for engagement on battleground against the terrorists, she said, “we must continue to take the fight to these terrorist groups on the battlefield. And the UK will remain at the forefront of this effort, while also helping to build the capabilities of our alliances and our partners to better take on this challenge.”

Theresa May also urged to **strike a balance between protecting our people and protecting their freedoms.** Referring to the current Rohingya situation in Myanmar, Prime Minister May

		<p>said, “And we must <u>always guard against those who would use the fight against terrorism as a cover for oppression and the violation of human rights</u>. So as we look at the situation in Northern Burma, I call on the Burmese authorities to <u>put an end to the violence, allow humanitarian access, and fully implement Annan Commission recommendations</u>.”<sup>5</sup></p>
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**Table 2**

<b>Countries</b>	<b>Representative</b>	<b>Terrorism</b>
India	Sushma Swaraj, External Affairs Minister	External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj highlighted the <b>conflagration of terrorism and its ideology</b> . With an emphasis and focus on Pakistan, she <u>compared Pakistan with India</u> and said, “why is it that today India is a recognised IT superpower in the world, and Pakistan is recognised only as the pre-eminent export factory for terror? Comparing India’s IT revolution and advancement in education with Pakistan’s export of terrorism, she said, “We have marched ahead consistently without pause creating IIMs, IITs, AIIMS and in the fields of education and across the range of human welfare. We established scientific and technical institutions which are the pride of the world. <u>But what has Pakistan offered to the world and</u>

		<p><u>indeed to its own people apart from terrorism?</u>  <u>They have produced terrorists and terrorist camps.</u></p> <p>Sushma Swaraj pointed out the <u>failure of the UN in implementing the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT)</u> that was proposed by India in 1996 and <u>its inability to agree upon a definition of terrorism.</u><sup>6</sup></p>
Pakistan	Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Prime Minister	<p>Starting with the crisis in West Asia, particularly Syria, Iraq and Yemen, Prime Minister Abbasi talked about the <b>proliferation of terrorist violence</b>. In this context he said, “Although Daesh appears to have been weakened in Iraq and Syria, <u>terrorist violence has spread and intensified across the Middle East and Africa and other parts of the world.</u>”</p> <p>Highlighting Pakistan’s role in the global counter-terrorism campaign, specifically in Afghanistan, he categorically <b>denied the existence of terrorist safe havens within Pakistan</b> and asserted, “it is especially galling for Pakistan to be blamed for the military or political stalemate in Afghanistan. We are not prepared to be anyone’s scapegoat. <u>Taliban “safe havens” are located not in Pakistan but in the</u></p>

large tracts of territory controlled by the Taliban in Afghanistan. Post-9/11, he said, “it was Pakistani efforts that enabled the decimation of Al-Qaeda.”

While pointing out the **success of domestic military operations inside the country**, he said, “Pakistan’s military campaigns have succeeded in clearing our tribal areas of almost all militant groups.”

In context of India, PM Abbasi accused India of “war crimes” in Kashmir. He said, “India has responded with massive and indiscriminate force to suppress the Kashmiris, shooting indiscriminately at children, women and youth. Hundreds of innocent Kashmiris have been killed or injured. These and other brutalities clearly constitute war crimes and violate the Geneva Conventions.”

He pointed out **two major gaps in the global counter-terrorism strategy.**

“First, the international community has failed to address the issue of state sponsored terrorism. This is an instrument of choice of the agents of chaos and aspiring hegemons. Second, to

		<p>eliminate terrorism, its <u>root causes must be addressed</u>. These are not only poverty and ignorance; terrorism is even more an extreme response to real or perceived political and other grievances, including foreign intervention, oppression and injustice.<sup>7</sup></p>
Afghanistan	Ashraf Ghani, President	<p>On the <b>continued threat posed by non-state actors post-9/11</b>, President Ghani said, “the threat of violence by non-state actors has taken the form of a <u>Fifth Wave of political violence and terrorism</u>. Driven by transnational terrorist networks, criminal organizations, cyber-crime and state sponsorship of terror, this <u>Fifth Wave promises to be a decades-long threat to international security rather than a passing phenomenon.</u>”</p> <p>In the global fight against terrorism, he highlighted the role of Afghanistan as being the <u>frontline state</u> in this global struggle, pointing out that “there are over 20 international terrorist groups with an imposed presence on Afghan soil.”</p> <p><b>Welcoming US President Donald Trump’s South Asia strategy</b>, President Ghani said that “[it] has now set us on a <u>pathway to certainty</u>. The Afghan people have looked to the United</p>

		<p>States for this type of resolve for years.”</p> <p>He called upon <b>Pakistan</b> to “<u>engage with us on a comprehensive state to state dialogue</u> on peace, security and regional cooperation leading to prosperity.”<sup>8</sup></p>
Bangladesh	Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister	<p>PM Sheikh Hasina categorically condemned “<u>all kinds of terrorism and violent extremism</u>.” She said, “Our government maintains a ‘<u>zero tolerance</u>’ policy in this regard.” Further elaborating on this point, PM Hasina pointed out <b>three basic principles</b> to offset the spread of violent extremism. These include, “First, <u>stop supplying arms</u> to the terrorists; Second, <u>stop terrorist financing</u>; and third, <u>settle all international disputes peacefully</u>.”</p> <p>She urged the UN to address the growing threats emanating from “<b>cyber space</b> to prevent money laundering, terrorist financing and other transnational organized crimes.”<sup>9</sup></p>
Maldives	Dr. Mohamed Asim, Minister of Foreign Affairs	<p>Identifying three reasons – “<u>chaos, vacuum, and uncertainty</u>” - as the reasons for the spread of terrorism, Dr. Asim said that these three things have given the “opportunity for Daesh to start their own brand of terror, their own version of religion, and their own brutal methods of fear.”</p>

		<p>He called combating terrorism and fighting violent as “<u>national priorities.</u>”</p> <p>He gave details about the <b>counter-terrorism measures</b> undertaken by Maldives, which includes enactment of a national legislation and formulation of a comprehensive national policy in the fight against violence extremism. Pointing it to be a “top priority” for Maldives, he said, “we have also established last year the <u>National Centre for Counter Terrorism.</u>”</p> <p>On the establishment of the new <b>Office of Counter-Terrorism</b> in UN (June 21, 2017), Dr. Asim said that it will “inject more energy in the implementation of the <u>Plan of Action in Preventing Violent Extremism</u>” that was presented in the UNGA by the Secretary-General on January 15, 2016.<sup>10</sup></p>
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*Disclaimer: The views expressed are that of the Researcher and not of the Council.*

<sup>1</sup> Remarks by President Trump to the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, *The White House*, Office of the Press Secretary, September 19, 2017, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/09/19/remarks-president-trump-72nd-session-united-nations-general-assembly>, accessed on September 26, 2017

<sup>2</sup> Speech by Wang Yi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, At the General Debate of The 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, September 21, 2017, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/t1496244.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1496244.shtml), accessed on October 25, 2017

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<sup>3</sup> United Nations General Assembly – Speech by M. Emmanuel Macron, President of the Republic, *France Diplomatie*, September 19, 2017, <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/united-nations/united-nations-general-assembly-sessions/unga-s-72nd-session/article/united-nations-general-assembly-speech-by-m-emmanuel-macron-president-of-the>, accessed on September 27, 2017

<sup>4</sup> Statement by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, September 21, 2017,

[http://www.mid.ru/en/diverse/-/asset\\_publisher/zwI2FuDbhJx9/content/vystuplenie-ministra-inostrannyh-del-rossii-s-v-lavrova-na-72-j-sessii-ga-oon-n-u-jork-21-sentabra-2017-goda?\\_101\\_INSTANCE\\_zwI2FuDbhJx9\\_redirect=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.mid.ru%2Fen%2Fdiverse%3Fp\\_p\\_id%3D101\\_INSTANCE\\_zwI2FuDbhJx9%26p\\_p\\_lifecycle%3D0%26p\\_p\\_state%3Dnormal%26p\\_p\\_mode%3Dview%26p\\_p\\_col\\_id%3Dcolumn-1%26p\\_p\\_col\\_pos%3D2%26p\\_p\\_col\\_count%3D5](http://www.mid.ru/en/diverse/-/asset_publisher/zwI2FuDbhJx9/content/vystuplenie-ministra-inostrannyh-del-rossii-s-v-lavrova-na-72-j-sessii-ga-oon-n-u-jork-21-sentabra-2017-goda?_101_INSTANCE_zwI2FuDbhJx9_redirect=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.mid.ru%2Fen%2Fdiverse%3Fp_p_id%3D101_INSTANCE_zwI2FuDbhJx9%26p_p_lifecycle%3D0%26p_p_state%3Dnormal%26p_p_mode%3Dview%26p_p_col_id%3Dcolumn-1%26p_p_col_pos%3D2%26p_p_col_count%3D5), accessed on September 27, 2017

<sup>5</sup> Theresa May's speech to the UN General Assembly 2017, September 20, 2017,

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/theresa-mays-speech-to-the-un-general-assembly-2017>, accessed on September 27, 2017

<sup>6</sup> Statement by External Affairs Minister at the General Debate of the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, *Ministry of External Affairs*, September 23, 2017,

<http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/28978/Statement+by+External+Affairs+Minister+at+the+General+Debate+of+the+72nd+Session+of+the+United+Nations+General+Assembly+New+York+September+23+2017>, accessed on September 27, 2017

<sup>7</sup> PM's statement at the General Debate of the 72nd Session of the UN, Prime Minister's Office, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, September 21, 2017, [http://pmo.gov.pk/pm\\_speech\\_details.php?speech\\_id=92](http://pmo.gov.pk/pm_speech_details.php?speech_id=92), accessed on September 27, 2017

<sup>8</sup> President Ghani's Remarks At The 72nd Session Of The United Nations General Assembly, Office of the President, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, September 20, 2017, <http://president.gov.af/en/SP/60032>, accessed on September 27, 2017

<sup>9</sup> The 72nd Session of the UNGA, Address by H.E. Sheikh Hasina, Hon'ble Prime Minister, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, *UN*, [https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/72/bd\\_en.pdf](https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/72/bd_en.pdf), p. 3, accessed on October 23, 2017

<sup>10</sup> Statement by His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Asim, Minister of Foreign Affairs at the General Debate of the Seventy-Second Session of the United Nations General Assembly - 23 September 2017, *Embassy of the Maldives*, London, <http://maldivesembassy.uk/index.php/news/news-from-maldives/item/1267-statement-by-his-excellency-dr-mohamed-asim,-minister-of-foreign-affairs-at-the-general-debate-of-the-seventy-second-session-of-the-united-nations-general-assembly-23-september-2017>, accessed on October 23, 2107