

IPU SG Speech during the First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism 9 September 2021, Vienna

Honourable Speakers,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to stand before you at the First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism. Terrorism has been on the IPU agenda since 1925, however, in the past two decades the IPU has adopted more than thirteen resolutions on countering terrorism, including more than 260 operative paragraphs. These resolutions represent the demands of parliamentarians over the past two decades. Of these 260 operative paragraphs, many asked for stronger cooperation with the United Nations, an increase in the exchange of expertise, and the unifying of efforts.

In 2014, as the new Secretary General of the IPU, terrorism forced itself high upon my agenda, and with increasing demands from parliamentarians, the IPU established a IPU Programme on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism. In 2015 and 2016, the IPU began negotiations with the UNODC, prior to the establishment of the UNOCT, on how to institutionalise counter-terrorism efforts both within the IPU and international organisations. In 2017, the global parliamentary community discussed the establishment of the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, as the global parliamentary focal point for countering terrorism. In 2019, after the establishment of the UNOCT, the IPU signed a trilateral agreement with the UNODC and the UNOCT; one of the activities of this trilateral agreement was this very Summit. The IPU Programme on Countering Terrorism, thanks to the support of the members of the IPU, is currently producing strong results with clear and measurable impacts.

The IPU Countering Terrorism Programme is focused on unifying world efforts in countering terrorism and directing them to people on the ground in terrorist-controlled areas. In the past years, despite the constraints imposed on us by the COVID-19 pandemic, this Programme succeeded in holding numerous activities, in cooperation with our partners. The Programme successfully held three regional conferences: in the Middle East, the Sahel, and the Asia-Pacific. These conferences raised the important issue of supporting victims of terrorism, and we are in the process of establishing Model Legislative Provisions that will soon be presented in New York. At this time, the IPU Secretariat also developed several products to unify counter-terrorism activities in one stream-line, providing instant access to relevant information, legislation, and best-practices, as well as the biggest library of legislation, created by the UNODC, that can address all of our needs.

From our experiences at the IPU, we have clearly seen the interlinkages between underdevelopment and terrorism, between illiteracy and terrorism, and between climate



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change and terrorism. Besides security, the only comprehensive solutions in countering terrorism are development, education, human rights, and gender equality. Now is also the time for parliamentarians and governments to talk to tribal leaders, civil society, and religious leaders. You can only truly counter terrorism through the elimination of extremist misconceptions of belief. Protecting human rights should also be at the centre of any counter-terrorism national plan, as the respect of human rights and the preservation of life and development is what differentiates us from terrorists.

This Summit focuses on listening to the victims of terrorism. Their experiences should guide us in our solutions. In this Summit, we have also focused on the role of parliamentarians in the prevention of violent extremism and hate speech. It is also a chance to address the deteriorating situation in the Sahel countries. This truly requires a global commitment, and I would like to commend regional parliamentary associations that have come together for collective approach to counter terrorism. I would like to thank the High-Level Advisory Group, it's Chairperson and members, and our partners. I would also like to thank China, UAE, Bangladesh, Benin, and Sweden for their continued support. Finally, I would like to take this chance to ask other members of the IPU to support this Programme, as through this Programme we can truly focus on countering terrorism and preventing the violent extremism that is conducive to terrorism.