

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**His Excellency, Mr. Ban Ki Moon, Secretary General of the
United Nations,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Asalamu Alaikaum and Good Morning

I congratulate you, Mr. Secretary General, for organizing today's symposium on "Counter Terrorism Cooperation". I also felicitate the US Secretary of State Mrs. Hillary Clinton for her pioneering role in ensuring her country's engagement in countering terrorism globally.

Mr. Chairman,

As a victim of terrorism, my heart goes out to all who have suffered as a result of such mindless violence. This year we especially remember those who died in the terrible 9/11 attacks here in the US, as well as their families who continue to live with the loss every day. I want to once again express my deepest condolences to the families of the 2,997 people, including the 60 Bangladeshis who died during those horrendous attacks in the twin towers.

In Bangladesh, I have experienced first hand the destruction and grief such violence reaps. During a political rally on 21 August 2004, 13 grenades were lobbed at us by a terrorist group, sponsored by a political party. In the attack 22 lives were lost, and over 500 left wounded or maimed for life. I was lucky to escape intact, but with permanent loss of hearing.

My first experience of terrorism goes further back, as on 15 August 1975, my father, the then prime minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and 18 members of my close family including my ten year old brother, Russel, were cold bloodedly murdered. These personal losses are irreparable, but every time I think of that gruesome act, my resolve in fighting senseless violence and terror grows stronger.

Terrorists do not belong to any race, religion, ethnicity, or nationality and no single country can ever succeed in combating terrorism and its global outreach and financing. We must, therefore, strengthen our regional and global cooperation mechanisms in dealing with this menace.

Bangladesh believes that the UN is the only legitimate multilateral body capable of coordinating global action against terrorism. We have full faith in its institutions, the General Assembly, Security Council, CTED and in its Global Counter Terrorism Strategy in spearheading measures for the prevention of terrorism.,

It is in this spirit that each year Bangladesh tables a resolution entitled “A Culture of Peace and Non-violence” at the UNGA. Our commitment is also reflected by our position as a top UN peace keeping force and a trusted partner of the UN in the maintenance of global peace and development.

Bangladesh, due to its own bitter experience, condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Countering terrorism and promoting global peace and security is our constitutional and foreign policy priority. We also subscribe to 13 universal anti-terrorism mechanisms and maintain a “zero tolerance” policy against terrorism, and religious extremism.

Our government is determined to ensure a democratic, secular, tolerant, inclusive and equitable society and our foreign policy does not allow our territory to be used for terrorist or subversive activity against another state. We have been successful in destroying most of known terrorist networks, together with their arms and ammunitions. We have also banned all terrorist groups blacklisted by the 1267 Committee and are keeping a close eye on any suspicious activity.

Moreover, we enacted Bangladesh's first Anti-Terrorism Act in 2009 and updated it in 2011 to bring it up to global standards. We have also brought about the country's first ever Money Laundering Prevention Act, which we updated this year to make it more stringent. We have also finalized the country's first National Counter Terrorism Strategy in line with the UN Global Strategy. Only last month, we agreed to the Palermo Convention against Transnational Organized Crimes, to reach global standards in combating terrorism.

Our government is also currently implementing a national counter radicalization strategy through education, women's empowerment and the propagation of secular and moderate cultural values. Even our Imams or religious leaders are playing an active role with the media in raising awareness against terrorism and religious extremism. We are not allowing extremists to abuse Islam as a pretext for acts of terror. We remain at the forefront of regional counter-terrorism initiatives under the SAARC and BIMSTEC Counter-Terrorism Conventions.

May I also recommend the following for the Symposium's consideration?

- The UN should lead and steer the global discourse and action on counter-terrorism.

- The world should strive for a universal agreement on legal definition of terrorism.
- The Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism together with a distinction for people's legitimate struggle for independence from foreign occupation should be concluded early.
- National capacity building and training of Counter Terrorism personnel of developing countries and the LDCs, like Bangladesh, should remain high in the agenda of the UN.
- Establishment of an International Center for Counter-Terrorism under the UN, with a comprehensive global database on terrorist outfits and suspects for coordination and intelligence sharing among states.
- The root causes of terrorism including economic disparity, political and economic exclusion, prolonged and unresolved conflicts, and climatically induced loss of livelihood must be addressed and solution found.
- Respect for human Rights and for the Rule of Law must remain high in the agenda for fighting terrorism.

Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh will continue to promote democracy, secularism, free media, as well as interfaith and intercultural tolerance. We will also continue to strongly support innovative socio-economic interventions like the UN's millennium development goals.

I am happy to inform that we have not experienced any act of terrorism in Bangladesh, since I took over as Prime Minister, two and a half years ago, partly due to the pursuit of these pragmatic policies.

I conclude by calling on all the leaders here and the world over, to involve the whole of humanity in the fight against terrorism. Let us make a fresh vow to save our children and future generations from the horror of terrorism and killing of innocent human beings.

I thank you all

Khoda Hafez!
Joi Bangla! Joi Bangabandhu!
May Bangladesh Live Forever.