

Statement by Ambassador Bhagwant Bishnoi, Deputy Permanent Representative at the UN Security Council Open Debate on “The victims of attacks and abuse on ethnic or religious grounds in the Middle East” on March 27, 2015

**Mr. President,**

1. Thank you for organizing today's open debate on “The victims of attacks and abuse on ethnic or religious grounds in the Middle East”. I would like to compliment you for circulating a useful and well-structured concept note. I would also like to thank the Secretary General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and other briefers for the background that they have provided.

**Mr. President,**

2. At the outset, we would like to lend our voice to condemn violence perpetrated in the name of religion and ethnicity in the Middle East and elsewhere. Religious, cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity is an essential and indispensable component of the social fabric of human civilization. Persecution on the basis of this diversity strikes at our common humanity.

3. We express our deep concern with the activities of proscribed outfits, radicalized and extremist groups in the region which are critically impacting on peace and stability in the region while also jeopardizing human rights, fundamental freedoms and, in fact, the lives of ethnic, religious and other minority groups. Efforts must be taken by all parties and stakeholders in the region to curb these dangerous sectarian and extremist trends. We believe the consolidation of political processes and solutions while building durable state institutions will be the effective way of addressing such extremism and radicalism in the region.

**Mr. President,**

4. The international community is witness to excesses of terrorism and violent extremism in Middle East and elsewhere. This again highlights that there can be no justification for terrorism and violent extremism. The need to collectively demonstrate zero tolerance for terrorism and violent extremism has never been greater. The international community must take an unequivocal and resolute position against terrorism and violent extremism which is aimed at the destruction of human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy, and threatens the territorial integrity and security of the States.

5. Further, the issue requires a consolidated, rather than fragmented approach including that of developing a legal framework for fighting terrorism at the international level, especially by early adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism, as well as developing suitable regulatory frameworks for prosecution of terrorist outfits and personnel.

6. We recall that last year in September, the Security Council adopted Resolution 2178 which looks into the problem of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF). We believe that the Council needs to act robustly using the instruments of law that it has at its

disposal and also the information available to it to counter terrorism and maintain international peace and security.

**Mr. President,**

7. The primary responsibility to promote and protect human rights rests with the States. It is imperative that we fully respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all UN member-states when considering our response. Member states, on their part, should continue to take steps that are policy oriented and legal in nature, to ensure principles of equality and non-discrimination for all their citizens and to combat intolerance, negative stereo-typing, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons based on religion or belief.

**Mr. President,**

8. In conclusion we would like to reiterate that there could be no justification for terrorism in any form. The menace of terrorism has to be fought at all fronts and all places. There is also no place for violence in the name of religion and ethnicity. Member states and the international community should leave no stone unturned to promote and protect the human rights of all citizens to continue living in their own countries, in peace, freedom, equality and dignity.

I thank you.