



2nd day of the Twelfth Meeting
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SOFIA MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON PREVENTING AND COMBATING TERRORISM

1. We, the members of the Ministerial Council of the OSCE, having met together in Sofia, declare our resolute and unconditional condemnation of terrorist acts, in particular those committed in 2004 in Spain, Uzbekistan, Turkey and Russia, where in the city of Beslan terrorists brutally and callously killed innocent and defenceless children. We grieve the loss of hundreds of human lives and express our profound solidarity with victims of acts of terrorism and their families. These acts have vividly exposed terrorism's inhuman nature. We express our solidarity with the States not participating in our Organization which were also attacked by terrorists.

Reiterating that terrorism constitutes one of the most serious threats to peace and security and considering that acts of terrorism seriously impair the enjoyment of human rights, we reaffirm our commitment to protect the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, especially the right to life, of everyone within our jurisdiction against terrorist acts. We re-emphasize our determination to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, as a crime that has no justification, whatever its motivation or origin, and to conduct this fight with respect for the rule of law and in accordance with our obligations under international law, in particular international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law.

2. We underscore the leading role of the United Nations in the comprehensive fight against terrorism.

We reaffirm obligations and commitments adopted by our States in the field of combating terrorism within the United Nations, including resolutions 1267 (1999), 1373 (2001), 1456 (2003), 1535 (2004), 1540 (2004) and 1566 (2004) of the United Nations Security Council, as well as resolution 58/187 of the United Nations General Assembly, and we support the resolution 2004/87 of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. We also reaffirm obligations and commitments adopted within other international organizations of which we are members.

We welcome the importance attributed by UN Security Council resolution 1566 (2004) to the role of relevant international, regional and subregional organizations in strengthening international co-operation in the fight against terrorism and the call for intensified interaction with the United Nations.

We underline our determination to support the important efforts of the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee and of its Executive Directorate. We commit to hold ourselves to the highest possible standards of implementation of the 12 United Nations conventions and protocols related to terrorism. We also renew our call for co-operation on an expedited basis in resolving all outstanding issues with a view to adopting by consensus the draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism and the draft international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism.

We remain committed to the anti-terrorism OSCE decisions, in particular the commitments contained in the Bucharest Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism, the OSCE Charter on Preventing and Combating Terrorism and the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century.

Our countries reaffirm their commitment to swift and full implementation of these decisions and arrangements throughout the OSCE area.

3. We welcome the OSCE's efforts in the field of combating terrorism, including the decisions adopted in 2004, and support the work of the Action against Terrorism Unit of the OSCE Secretariat.

We are convinced that the package of practical decisions that we adopt and welcome today¹, and their further implementation will increase the level of security and stability in the OSCE area. These decisions will help ensure implementation of our obligations under international law to prevent and combat terrorism.

4. We intend to step up OSCE activities and measures to prevent and combat terrorism and to address all the factors which engender conditions in which terrorist organizations are able to recruit and win support.

We reaffirm that the OSCE efforts to counter terrorist threats should be taken in all OSCE dimensions, the security dimension, including the politico-military area, the economic and environmental dimension, and the human dimension. Based on the common, comprehensive and indivisible approach to security, our Organization could make further substantial contributions to global anti-terrorist efforts.

We are convinced that respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms is an important element of ensuring peace and stability and prevention of terrorism. We acknowledge that effective prevention of and fight against terrorism require the involvement of civil society in our countries.

1 Permanent Council Decision No. 617 on Further Measures to Suppress Terrorist Financing (1 July 2004)
Permanent Council Decision No. 618 on Solidarity with Victims of Terrorism (1 July 2004)
Ministerial Decision on Combating the Use of the Internet for Terrorist Purposes
Ministerial Decision on Enhancing Container Security
Ministerial Decision on Reporting Lost/Stolen Passports to Interpol's ASF-STD

We are determined to further strengthen our interaction at both bilateral and multilateral levels in various formats in order to forestall the threat of terrorism in the OSCE area and in the world. We will actively co-operate to find and bring to justice the perpetrators, organizers, supporters and sponsors of terrorist acts.

We also will continue to develop interaction and dialogue on the issues of preventing and combating terrorism with the Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation.