

Fact Sheet: UN Security Council Resolution 2178 on Foreign Terrorist Fighters

Today, President Obama is chairing a historic high-level Summit of the UN Security Council focusing on the surge in Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) worldwide. At this session, the Security Council will adopt a resolution creating a new policy and legal framework for international action in response to this threat.

Resolution 2178 requires countries to take certain steps to address the FTF threat, including to prevent suspected FTFs from entering or transiting their territories and to have laws to prosecute FTFs. It also calls on states to undertake various steps to improve international cooperation in this field, such as by sharing information. In this resolution, for the first time ever, the Council underscores that Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) is an essential element of an effective response to the FTF phenomenon. Resolution 2178 also focuses existing UN counterterrorism bodies on the FTF threat, providing a framework for long-term monitoring and assistance to countries in their efforts to address this threat.

Adopted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, this resolution:

1. Reaffirms that Member States must comply with their human rights obligations when fighting terrorism and notes that a failure to do so contributes to radicalization.
2. Defines the term Foreign Terrorist Fighter as "individuals who travel to a State other than their States of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning, or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts or the providing or receiving of terrorist training, including in connection with armed conflict."
3. Expresses particular concern about the FTFs who have joined the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Al-Nusrah Front and other groups associated with Al-Qaida.
4. Expresses concern over the use of the internet to incite others to commit terrorist acts and underlines the need to prevent terrorists from exploiting technology to incite support for terrorist acts, while at the same time respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.
5. Notes the work of other multilateral bodies, including Interpol and other UN agencies, and the recent adoption by the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) of recommended good practices to respond to the FTF threat.
6. Demands FTFs disarm and cease all terrorist acts and participation in armed conflict.
7. Calls upon countries to require their airlines to provide advance passenger information to detect the travel of UN-listed terrorists.

Obligations

8. Requires countries to prevent and suppress recruiting, organizing, transporting and equipping of FTFs, and the financing of FTF travel and activities.
9. Requires countries to have laws that permit the prosecution of:
 - Their nationals and others departing their territories who travel or attempt to travel for terrorism purposes;
 - The wilful provision or collection of funds by their nationals or in their territories with the intent or knowledge that they will be used to finance travel of FTFs;
 - The wilful organization or facilitation by their nationals or in their territories of such travel.
10. Requires countries to prevent the entry or transit of individuals believed to be traveling for terrorism-related purposes.

International Cooperation

11. Calls upon countries to improve international, regional and sub-regional cooperation to prevent FTF travel, including through increased information sharing.
12. Highlights the need for countries to comply with their existing obligations regarding cooperation in terrorism-related criminal investigations and proceedings with respect to investigations and proceedings involving FTFs.
13. Encourages Interpol to intensify its efforts to respond to the FTF threat.
14. Calls upon countries to help each other build capacity to address the FTF threat and welcomes bilateral assistance to do so.

Countering Violent Extremism in Order to Prevent Terrorism

15. Underscores that Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) is an essential element of responding to the FTF threat.
16. Calls upon States to enhance CVE efforts and take steps to decrease the risk of radicalization to terrorism in their societies, such as engaging relevant local communities, empowering concerned groups of civil society, and adopting tailored approaches to countering FTF recruitment.

UN Engagement

17. Directs UN counter-terrorism bodies to focus attention on FTF threat, enabling the international community to assess compliance with this resolution and to target assistance to those countries that need help enforcing its provisions.
18. Requests a report from the UN within 180 days to assess comprehensively the FTF phenomenon and recommend actions to enhance the response to the threat.