

**Statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania,**

**H.E. Mr. Ditmir Bushati**

**Security Council summit meeting**

Agenda item "*Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.*"

**24 September 2014 (15.00) / SC room**

Mr. President (Madame President),

Let me thank you for calling this timely meeting on such a particularly complex issue.

We highly appreciate the leadership the United States has been showing, including in particular during its Security Council presidency, on the issue of countering terrorism and the rise of foreign terrorist fighters.

Mr. President (Madame President),

Last Sunday Pope Francis chose Albania in his first visit in a European country, a secular country where Muslims and Christians are living and prospering together.

As Pope Francis exhorted during his visit: **“May no one use religion as a pretext for actions against human dignity and against the fundamental rights of every man and woman”**.

Contrary to these fundamental values ISIL has abundantly shown what it is capable of.

ISIL must be defeated and its extremist ideology, that promotes and justifies terrorism. Its ruthless methods must be countered.

In this context, we highly appraise President Obama’s remarks and the determination of the United States to degrade and ultimately defeat ISIL.

**As ISIL actively tries to recruit citizens everywhere to join its terrorist cause, the phenomenon of foreign fighters is now of particular concern.**

Indeed, foreign terrorist fighters pose a serious threat to the whole trajectory of their journey: **to States they transit and to States of destination.**

But the threat is also great for the **States of origin** - as **the return of foreign fighters to their countries of origin carries potential risks, particularly:**

- where security structures are insufficient,
- where political stability is fragile,
- where social cohesion is yet unformed
- or where there is a complex fabric of religious and ethnic composure, as it is the case in the Balkans.

The international effort to counter ISIL has been picking up momentum and contributors. **Albania is proud to have been among the first countries to respond to this challenge.**

But it has become clear now that it is a challenge that will require our long-term engagement in different ways: be it through military support to Iraq, or through stopping the flow of foreign fighter.

And all this, **without forgetting the social, economic and humanitarian dimensions of the crises in Iraq and Syria.**

Mr. President,

We condemn unequivocally and in the strongest terms all terrorist acts committed by terrorist groups and organizations everywhere.

**No cause can justify terror; no logic can accept the death of innocent people.**

In this respect, in the Western Balkans, Albania, has been at the forefront of the international efforts to stop the flow of fighters.

My country has taken concrete legislative, administrative and security measures, adopting specific laws punishing the act of participating into conflicts and wars in other countries.

But let's not forget that the use of force is hardly the only way to defeat and put an end to terrorism or discourage the dark appeal of Foreign Fighters.

**If we are serious about the eradication of this phenomenon, we must think also in social and economic terms:** in terms of what we can offer to the marginalized groups within these societies.

We will have more chances to be successful in countering incitement to commit terrorist acts not only through the force of the rule of law but also by caring more for the social inclusion of the marginalized, through education, solidarity and support.

Mr. President (Madame President),

The resolution which my country is proud to have cosponsored, underlined the importance of cooperation between all Member States to address the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters.

My country stands ready to further contribute to international efforts in strengthening peace, stability and cooperation among nations.

I thank you.