



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

Chemin du Pommier 5  
Case postale 330  
1218 Le Grand-Saconnex  
Geneva – Switzerland  
www.ipu.org

## Speech by Ms. Gabriela Cuevas Barron, IPU President

UNOCT High-level Regional Conference  
on Counter terrorism and the prevention of violent extremism conducive  
to terrorism

Kenya, 11 July 2019

Terrorism is not the spirit of religions. No God would express himself through hatred and death.

Terrorism is not a strategy of politics, it is to use fear as an instrument of manipulation, division, and human degradation.

Terrorism has only one ideology: violence as a means, the demoralization of society as an end.

Terrorism not only attacks its victims, it wants to destroy the heart of every nation.

In general we can say that:

Terrorism is a very specific type of violence, one that is used against civilians and non-combatants as a means of creating a state of shock, upheaval, or terror in third parties in order to convey a message for purpose of vindication, using terror as a vehicle.

Its ultimate goal is to modify the behaviour, attitudes, and opinions of a society and to coerce actors to attain certain objectives.

It is also an element that corrodes the very value of democracy and becomes an instrument of the most radical groups to subvert democratic regimes and their own functioning.

For decades we have received a lot of information about terrorism, and more now when communications are faster and more accessible. But, I suggest that to have a more precise analysis we focus on the data:

According to the Global Terrorism Index published by the Institute for Economics and Peace:

First fact:

Less than 3% of terrorist attacks occurred in OECD countries. For we can see that their effects are huge. September 11 changed the world, not because of the number of victims, but because of the feeling of lack of protection that infected the most powerful population in the world.

Important aspect, its causes:

IEP found an important correlation between terrorism and socioeconomic factors such as youth unemployment levels, trust of the press and democracy, drug-related crimes, and attitudes to immigrants.

According to this and other studies, in OECD countries the only way to end terrorism from the root is to combat marginalization, inequality and discrimination and implement

real policies of inclusion and belonging for young people. Does this mean that every migrant or young person without a job is a terrorist? No. What the data tell us is that we have to eradicate the conditions that generate an enabling environment for terrorists to recruit our young people. It urges us to avoid that the psychological, emotional, technological and cultural aspects of modern societies do not isolate our young people in such a way that drains them of all sense of life.

Fact 2:

On the other hand, 97% of the attacks are less visible because of the frequency with which they occur, and because they are countries where - sadly - we get used to listening or reading about death and conflicts. In this, the media has a great responsibility. We should be equally empathetic about an attack that happens in Paris, New York, Mexico or Jordan, Syria or Nigeria. Indifference is the seed of terror. For example, in 2016 only 75% of the deaths caused by terrorist attacks were concentrated in 5 countries.

Caused by:

In these countries terrorist activities are associated with instability and conflict, corruption, lack of respect for religious and human rights, the prevalence of organized crime networks and state-perpetrated violence, among other factors.

From these data it appears that we have a main task: peacebuilding through national and international institutions.

Is the fight against terrorism that our governments and multilateral institutions carry out every day to achieve peace sufficient? Not at all.

Yes, this combat is an indispensable task. It is urgent to dismantle the terrorist groups that every day represent a threat and that they kill around 25 thousand people every year.

But if we want to not only fight but eradicate terrorism, our actions must go deeper. That is, we must also eradicate the causes that give rise to terrorism, the reasons why thousands of young people are willing to kill others. We have to build a sustainable peace.

Now, what do we mean by peace?

Peace is not only the absence of violence. Peace occurs where institutions do not humiliate their citizens. That is, where they are guaranteed access to goods and rights that allow them to develop their life plan, regardless of their origin, skin colour, political or sexual preferences.

To live in peace, in a sustainable peace that lasts over time, it is essential to create and maintain certain conditions: (Institute for Economics and Peace):

- a) A well-functioning government,
- b) Equitable distribution of resources,
- c) Free flow of information,
- d) Good relations with neighbours,
- e) High levels of human capital,
- f) Acceptance of the rights of others,
- g) Low levels of corruption,
- h) A sound business environment.

How to achieve it? What should we do? Understanding the phenomenon from an integral perspective and attending to the causes that originate it.

1. The policies that are giving good results in some OECD countries are those aimed at inclusion, at direct work with communities that have been marginalized, at the generation of educational and work opportunities. Inclusion is not only the mandate of the 2030 Development Agenda, it is a moral imperative.
2. The strengthening of governmental institutions is urgent, particularly in those countries that are in armed conflicts or that recover from them. The countries with the highest homicide rates and those countries where there are constant terrorist attacks have in common a serious institutional weakness.
  - a. It is essential to end corruption and have more efficient governments, capable of responding to citizen demands.
  - b. Institutional redesign. We cannot continue to govern our 21st century planet with institutions that were designed in the 18th century. We need to change our governance models for more effective, inclusive and representative ones.
  - c. The local sphere has a lot to say. It is necessary to remake the social fabric from our communities. Here, not only parliamentarians play a crucial role as popular representatives, but also mayors.
3. The response to terrorism cannot be made with the same weapons and rules of terrorists. Restricting liberties, hurting democracy, generating authoritarian governments is not the answer. The voice of terrorism is that of fear, it cannot be the State that echoes and instils more fear in the population. The answer is in a more democratic and more inclusive model. In governments deeply committed to human rights and policies to promote respect and tolerance. In governments that promote political participation, that citizens know they are part of their collective destiny through the implementation of mechanisms of deliberative democracy. That they have clear rules regarding the migration phenomenon. That the agents of the receiving states have the capacity to deal with migrants, to treat them with dignity, not to stigmatize them, to decriminalize them. Access to justice, the control and counterweight of authority, due process, and the universality of human rights are the best instruments to prevent and combat radicalisms.
4. Promotion, respect and defense of human rights. There is no trade-off between human rights and security, it is a false premise commonly used by authoritarian regimes. Countries where respect for human rights, and in particular religious rights are promoted are more open, tolerant and peaceful communities. Extremism is not fought from the other extreme, in fact, one end is fed with the mere existence of the other. A true fight against the causes of terrorism is made from tolerance, respect and love for humanity regardless of our differences. But this must be promoted with educational policies that show our children the different faces of humanity. Like as Octavio Paz said "I am not, there is no me, it is always us".
5. In addition to having a direct responsibility in these tasks, specifically the more than 46 thousand parliamentarians from all over the planet have duties - and clear commitments - in which we are working to prevent and combat terrorism.
  - a. Coordinated work with the United Nations. IPU already signed a MoU in which we set a work route.
  - b. Legislation:
    - i. Short term: It is essential to generate better regulatory frameworks in matters that are clearly linked to crime and terrorism: money laundering, human trafficking, migration, human rights, among others.

- ii. Long term: Institutional design. New institutions for the new challenges.
- c. Budgeting: Understanding inclusion as a mandate. Budget allocation is the most important public policy instrument in a country. Inclusion must be the priority.
- d. Surveillance: The devil is in the details. A work of better implementation of our international commitments and national responsibilities is necessary. It is necessary that this surveillance also reviews the full validity of human rights and freedoms, as well as the strengthening of governmental institutions.
- e. Representation: The social fabric is more necessary than ever, that's where we learn our values and grow, that's where we understand the value of the community.

Through the Inter-Parliamentary Union, here we are legislators from 179 countries work committed to the construction of a planet in peace. A safe, just, democratic, tolerant planet.