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***“Combatting Foreign Terrorist Fighters: A Global Crisis in Need of a Global Response”***

Good afternoon, and thank you President Ballestrazzi and Secretary General Noble for your strong leadership. I would also like to thank INTERPOL and the National Central Bureaus from across the world for organizing and attending this extraordinary event. And to our host country and the people of Monaco, thank you for your warm hospitality. This is my fourth General Assembly in four years. I'm honored once again to have the opportunity to address the global law enforcement community.

Last year, I spoke in Cartagena about smarter strategies for combatting global trade in illegal drugs. The year before, I spoke in Rome about transnational organized crime and human trafficking. And my first year, in Vietnam, I spoke about the cyber threats that plague us all. These challenges addressed at INTERPOL General Assemblies share a common theme: the need for coordinated global responses to global problems.

And right now, nothing fits that description more than the scourge of violent extremism—and, most importantly, the urgent threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters. These are individuals who leave their home countries to join the fight alongside terrorist groups, and right now they are doing so in record numbers. They are fueling regional conflicts and contributing to barbaric violence. We estimate that over 15,000 foreign terrorist fighters from more than 80 countries have traveled to Syria alone. And in Syria, we estimate that about a dozen people from the United States are fighting alongside terrorist groups.

We also face the real threat that fighters hardened by the brutality of groups like ISIL may return home to carry out heinous acts against our people. To give one example: In May, a gunman attacked and killed four people at the Jewish Museum in Brussels. The French national who was arrested for the attack allegedly spent about a year in Syria fighting with extremist groups.

This crisis has galvanized the international community. In September, at a summit presided over by President Obama, the U.N. Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2178, a landmark agreement addressing the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters. The

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Resolution recognizes that we must all cooperate closely to use all the tools at our disposal, consistent with respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

I want to talk about three pillars of the Resolution: the need for Member States to establish and enforce laws to address the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters; the importance of international cooperation and information sharing among Member States, including cooperation through INTERPOL; and the essential role of countering violent extremism at its roots.

*First*, the Resolution calls on Member States to prevent and prosecute travel for the purpose of engaging in terrorism or receiving terrorist training, and to criminalize terrorist financing and facilitation. The Resolution requires us all to ensure that our domestic legal systems are agile enough to give law enforcement the authority to disrupt terrorist fighters from transiting their territories to enter conflict zones for the purpose of engaging in terrorist acts. We all need the ability to stop a would-be terrorist before he launches a suicide attack at home or in a distant land. But to do that, States need to have the domestic laws that give them these tools.

Our laws in the United States criminalize a broad range of material support for terrorist activity, including support for foreign terrorist organizations designated through a rigorous process. Other countries are bringing cases under laws that prohibit specific terrorist activities, or criminal association with the intent to commit terrorist acts. Whatever the approach, we should never need to wait until an individual is already in Syria or Iraq—or until he has already returned home—before law enforcement can disable a threat.

*Second*, as the U.N. Resolution recognizes, suppression of this threat must be a joint effort. And this is where INTERPOL has and must play an increasingly important role. The U.N. Resolution specifically commended INTERPOL's efforts to address the threat of foreign terrorist fighters. INTERPOL enables crucial, secure global information sharing among law enforcement officials through its secure I-24/7 network, and through its databases and systems for advisory notices and diffusions. And INTERPOL's Lost and Stolen Travel Documents database allows National Central Bureaus to report missing passports and other documents to prevent their use by the wrong people. We must work together to ensure that we use these capabilities to suppress the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters.

Indeed, INTERPOL is proactively addressing this threat. Its Foreign Terrorist Fighter program supports a multinational database containing information contributed by member countries. And today, more than 30 countries have provided information about over 800 suspected foreign terrorists fighters traveling to and from Syria.

But databases are only as valuable as the willingness of member countries to share information. And while our respective nations must protect sensitive intelligence, we must also recognize the importance of law enforcement cooperation. To that end, the United States is using INTERPOL's notice system to disseminate names of suspected foreign terrorist fighters who have traveled to fight for terrorist groups such as ISIL, the Al-Nusra Front, and al-Qaeda.

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We must also make smarter use of the information we already have. For example, the United States and more than 60 member countries now use travel information such as Advanced Passenger Information and Passenger Name Record data to identify known and potential foreign terrorists fighters before they board transnational flights. Member countries need to expand on these types of efforts wherever feasible.

*Third*, the U.N. Resolution recognizes the critical importance of countering violent extremism within our communities. An effective counterterrorism policy cannot begin only after people have become radicalized while sitting at their computers, or after they have purchased plane tickets to join the fight. Extremism must be addressed at its roots. And that means governments must engage with local communities and encourage them to offer a different path.

We must empower teachers, parents, coaches, and religious leaders to counter the narratives of violence and despair promoted by groups like ISIL. These are the people who have the credibility, authority, and connection to reach those vulnerable to recruitment, and who can spot trouble long before it leads to radicalization. That is why, at home, enhancing public engagement with local communities is one of the U.S. Justice Department's top priorities. Over the past few years, our U.S. Attorneys have gone out into their jurisdictions and held or attended more than 2,500 engagement-related events. We are listening to the concerns of parents, neighbors, ministers, and school districts. And we are opening crucial lines of communication and cooperation.

We recognize that to maintain these lines of communication, there must be trust and mutual respect between law enforcement officials and community leaders. That trust requires respect for people's beliefs and their civil rights. We cannot expect our citizens to report suspicious behavior if they do not trust that every individual will be dealt with fairly and in accordance with the rule of law. And ultimately, demonstrating that respect for the rule of law and for the basic values of tolerance and fairness is a key counter-radicalization tool.

So today, although I started by discussing why our countries' law enforcement communities must reach outward to our counterparts in other nations, I will end by noting how critical it is that we reach inward as well. Foreign terrorist fighters must be stopped at international borders. But they must also be stopped at home before they buy that plane ticket—and, ideally, before they reach that point of succumbing to radical ideology.

Thank you all for attending this extraordinary event. And thank you for all that your nations have done, and continue to do, to support INTERPOL's mission and our law enforcement partners and allies around the world.