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Chairman: Mr. AZZAROUK (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 126: MEASURES TO PREVENT INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM WHICH ENDANGERS OR TAKES INNOCENT HUMAN LIVES OR JEOPARDIZES FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS AND STUDY OF THE UNDERLYING CAUSES OF THOSE FORMS OF TERRORISM AND ACTS OF VIOLENCE WHICH LIE IN MISERY, FRUSTRATION, GRIEVANCE AND DESPAIR AND WHICH CAUSE SOME PEOPLE TO SACRIFICE HUMAN LIVES, INCLUDING THEIR OWN, IN AN ATTEMPT TO EFFECT RADICAL CHANGES (continued) (A/42/519 and Corr.1 and Add.1, A/42/193 and Add.1-3; A/C.6/42/L.2; (see also A/C.6/42/L.1); A/42/564)

(a) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

(b) CONVENING, UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE UNITED NATIONS, OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE TO DEFINE TERRORISM AND TO DIFFERENTIATE IT FROM THE STRUGGLE OF PEOPLES FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION

1. Mr. SZEKELY (Mexico) said that Mexico had given tangible proof of its willingness to contribute to the speedy and effective elimination of terrorism with its ratification of or accession to virtually all the major general international agreements relating to international terrorism, its adequate domestic legislation for the prevention and punishment of such criminal activity, and its foreign policy, which categorically rejected the instigation, organization or support of any terrorist acts, methods or practices.

2. Mexico believed that the international community must further investigate the underlying causes of all forms of terrorism and acts of violence. His delegation noted with concern that politically-motivated attempts, not always well-intentioned, were sometimes made to apply the term "terrorism" to almost any situation; that diminished the force and meaning of the term.

3. His delegation was also concerned that the international repudiation of terrorism could be distorted and manipulated as a pretext for impairing the objectives and rights of legitimate movements fighting for national liberation, and undermining the right of asylum and other values and principles of international law, such as that of non-intervention. Mexico believed that the international community's struggle against terrorism must be carried out with a good-faith approach to the meaning of the term "international terrorism".

4. Mr. ALI (Democratic Yemen) said that the phenomenon of terrorism, far from being modern, had been known since ancient times, and had its roots in the political, psychological and social spheres. At present, that question had taken on great importance, and there was a serious effort on the part of several States to work collectively to overcome the phenomenon. Nevertheless, there were those who were attempting to launch information or disinformation campaigns designed to present a more superficial picture of the situation. Since the United Nations had been making efforts to study that phenomenon and find an adequate solution, the issue must not be evaluated in a superficial way. His delegation believed that it was necessary to carry out an in-depth, objective and precise study of the

(Mr. Ali, Democratic Yemen)

question, in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Organization; that study must not be separated from the study of the causes of terrorism.

5. Although numerous resolutions adopted unanimously by the United Nations had urged an end to racial injustice and alien occupation, those resolutions had not always been respected, in particular by a minority. There were national liberation movements which were defending rights recognized in the Charter, such as the right of peoples to self-determination and their right to struggle for freedom and to defend themselves against oppression and annihilation. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Democratic Yemen had declared during the forty-second session of the General Assembly his support for the inclusion in the agenda of a new item relating to the convening, under the auspices of the United Nations, of an international conference to define terrorism and differentiate it from the struggle of peoples for national liberation. The Minister had also stated that he deplored the attempts of certain Western racist régimes to apply the word "terrorism" to the legitimate struggle of peoples for self-determination, citing in particular the peoples of Palestine, South Africa and Namibia.

6. Democratic Yemen's position on terrorism was very clear. Firstly, there was need for an in-depth, objective and precise study, free from the disinformation campaigns which tried to downplay the issue. Secondly, Democratic Yemen condemned acts of terrorism which were motivated by petty or personal interests and which resulted in the loss of innocent lives. Through co-operation among Member States, that type of terrorism could easily be combated. Nevertheless, the most serious form of terrorism was State terrorism, which was a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter and of the principles of international relations. State terrorism, whether it was a terrorism of occupation or a terrorism of racism, included acts of aggression, acts of expansionism, the illegal occupation of territories of other peoples, economic isolation, racial discrimination and the forcible establishment of settlements. Thirdly, while condemning individual acts of terrorism, Democratic Yemen reaffirmed its support for the inalienable rights to self-determination and independence of all peoples living under racist régimes, occupation or other forms of foreign hegemony. It was therefore necessary to distinguish clearly between terrorism and the legitimate struggle of peoples to attain self-determination in conformity with the principles of international law as set forth in the Charter. Fourthly, Democratic Yemen attached great importance to the study of the causes of terrorism, since it believed that the international community would not be able to eliminate terrorism without eliminating its root causes, which lay primarily in the rejection of the relevant United Nations resolutions and in acts of occupation and foreign domination. Fifthly, Democratic Yemen was prepared to co-operate with all the members of the international community in studying terrorism and seeking the necessary solutions to the problem. His delegation considered that the renewal of the mandate would be a positive step in that direction.

7. Mr. WIJewardane (Sri Lanka) said that the United Nations had approached the question of international terrorism in two ways: by emphasizing the need for co-operation among States to prevent acts of international terrorism, and by emphasizing the need to study the underlying causes of terrorism. Consequently, the United Nations resolutions had paid special attention to colonialism, racism,

(Mr. Wijewardane, Sri Lanka)

mass and flagrant violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and situations involving alien occupation that might give rise to international terrorism. A clear distinction had been drawn between the illegitimate activities of terrorist groups and the legitimate struggle of national liberation movements against colonial and racist régimes. Acts committed by the latter were not considered to fall within the ambit of international terrorism.

8. Any international initiative to combat terrorism must take into account the following factors: (a) the need to combat cross-border terrorism by not permitting the use of the territory of one State for terrorist activities directed against another State; (b) the need to simplify extradition procedures to enable the extradition of terrorists, notwithstanding any political motivation for the commission of the act; and (c) the need for co-operation among States for the exchange of intelligence, expertise, information, etc.

9. He noted that Sri Lanka had acceded to three Conventions on the hijacking of aircraft, concluded at Tokyo, The Hague and Montreal. His country was also considering ratifying the International Convention against the Taking of Hostages (General Assembly resolution 34/146) and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents (resolution 31/66 (XXVIII)).

10. On the question of an international conference to consider terrorism in all its aspects, his delegation had observed that there were differences of opinion on the need to conclude a comprehensive convention on terrorism. Sri Lanka, for its part, as a member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, had been active in urging the conclusion of a regional convention on terrorism. The President of Sri Lanka had taken the initiative at the Association's first summit meeting, which had set up a study group and an expert group on the subject of terrorism. A draft regional convention had already been prepared and would be considered at the forthcoming summit meeting of the Association in Kathmandu, Nepal. The draft covered terrorist acts which had a predominantly criminal element, and the object was to make it possible to extradite offenders, notwithstanding political motivation.

11. His delegation hoped that the Sixth Committee would consider item 126 in depth, and that the idea of holding an international conference to define terrorism would be well received. It would be very important for the conference to be well prepared and adequately documented, so that knowledge and understanding of the subject in all its manifestations could be expanded, while legitimate struggles for national liberation were excluded.

12. Mr. FLEISCHHAUER (Under-Secretary-General, The Legal Counsel) said that a number of documents circulated as General Assembly documents under agenda item 126 at the request of Member States were listed on pages 2 and 3 of document A/C.6/42/L.1. He had recently been informed that one of those documents (A/42/416), containing a letter dated 23 July 1987 from the Permanent Representatives of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United

(Mr. Fleischhauer)

Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, had been intended as a contribution to the Secretary-General's report on item 126 (A/42/519), not as a separate communication.

13. Mr. HAYASHI (Japan) said that the most important outcome of the efforts to prevent and suppress international terrorism, the harmful effects of which were recognized by all States, was the building of a legal framework consisting, inter alia, of the Tokyo Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft, the Hague Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft, the Montreal Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents, the International Convention against the Taking of Hostages and the Vienna Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. In resolution 40/61, adopted by consensus, the General Assembly had also unequivocally condemned, as criminal, all acts, methods and practices of terrorism, wherever and by whomever committed, and the Security Council had unanimously adopted, on 18 December 1985, a resolution condemning all acts of hostage-taking and abduction.

14. The momentum generated by the General Assembly and the Security Council two years earlier had been maintained, as was shown by the significant increase in the number of parties to the relevant conventions. Japan was one of the States which had become parties to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents, and to the International Convention against the Taking of Hostages.

15. He went on to note the work, described in part III of document A/42/519, of the International Civil Aviation Organization, the International Maritime Organization, the Council of Europe and the Organization of American States, as well as the declaration of the heads of State or Government of the seven major industrial nations at their meeting in Venice. Other groups of States also, such as the non-aligned countries, the States of the Islamic Conference and the Commonwealth States, had condemned all forms of terrorist activities and expressed their readiness to combat them.

16. His delegation considered that the trend for combating terrorism was thus clearly set. The international community had first focused its attention on specific aspects of terrorist activities, and had established a legal framework for preventing such acts and punishing the perpetrators. Subsequently, it had expanded the scope of that framework by adopting additional conventions covering other aspects of those activities. At the same time, the community of nations had tried to strengthen co-operation among States as much as possible, reaffirming their condemnation of terrorism and taking practical and technical measures to prevent and suppress it.

17. His delegation considered that the international community should seek in future to increase the number of parties to the relevant conventions and ensure that they were faithfully observed. It should also identify aspects of terrorist activities not covered by the existing framework and prepare appropriate legal

(Mr. Hayashi, Japan)

measures to fill the gap. At the same time, it should seek to devise new practical and technical measures to prevent and suppress terrorist activities, while taking every possible measure to strengthen and widen international co-operation.

18. In his delegation's view, the most effective approach to combating terrorism was the gradual expansion, based on general agreement, of the specific areas covered by international conventions. That was precisely the approach adopted in General Assembly resolution 40/61 and in draft resolution A/C.6/42/L.2. Japan, as one of the sponsors of the draft resolution, sincerely hoped that Member States would support it unanimously.

19. By the same token, his delegation believed that the call for a definition of terrorism made by some delegations would go directly against the main trend of the international community's current efforts, and might jeopardize its valuable achievements. In fact, the Ad Hoc Committee on International Terrorism had already attempted in the late 1970s to use an approach that involved the definition of terrorism. That criterion, as set out in paragraph 33 of the report of the final session of the Ad Hoc Committee, had encountered strong opposition, with the result that no agreement had been reached. In the circumstances, the Ad Hoc Committee had opted for the more modest, but also more realistic, approach currently being pursued by the international community. His delegation was convinced that another attempt to define terrorism would suffer the same fate, and that an international conference for that purpose would result in a loss of time and an enormous waste of resources. For that reason, his delegation seriously doubted the advisability of reviving the Ad Hoc Committee in order to entrust it with the task of defining terrorism or preparing for an international conference for that purpose. In fact, reconvening the Ad Hoc Committee with any mandate would serve no useful purpose and would lead to an unproductive and highly politicized debate.

20. Mr. ORDZHONIKIDZE (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Soviet Union unreservedly condemned all forms and manifestations of international terrorism, whatever their motives. Terrorism must be eradicated because it caused suffering and the loss of innocent lives, destabilized the international situation, created new sources of tension and provoked international conflicts. The Soviet Union had reiterated its readiness to co-operate with other States in eradicating international terrorism and considered that working at effective measures to that end was one of the essential foundations of a comprehensive system of international peace and security.

21. The Soviet Union and other Member States of the Warsaw Pact were in favour of drawing up international agreements to prevent and punish all acts of international terrorism. However, the methods used in combating terrorism must respect the principles and norms of international law. The Soviet Union had always condemned military, political and other pressures against sovereign States. There were those who sometimes tried to make political capital out of the indignation aroused by acts of violence. The Soviet Union viewed such attempts as destructive. The murderers responsible for such acts, whose victims were innocent people, must not be identified with entire peoples nor used as a pretext for punishing certain countries. Concerted efforts must be made to improve the international situation;

(Mr. Ordzhonikidze, USSR)

that would be a decisive contribution to the elimination of terrorism and its root causes. That did not mean, however, that nothing constructive could be achieved until the situation improved.

22. His delegation attached great importance to States' participation in the principal international agreements and to action to ensure compliance with their terms. The Soviet Union had become a party to the International Convention against the Taking of Hostages in 1987 and was now a party to all the international agreements on the subject.

23. Exchanges of information and mutual assistance in respect of penal measures taken to deal with acts of international terrorism would be an important element in co-operation among States. The Soviet Union was in favour of drafting new international legal instruments on the prevention of various forms of terrorism, and also of including in relevant bilateral and multilateral agreements special provisions on the extradition or punishment of terrorists. It also supported the drafting of agreements within the framework of the International Civil Aviation Organization and the International Maritime Organization.

24. The Soviet Union believed that greater use should be made of the United Nations capacity for combating international terrorism. In that connection, he wished to refer to the article addressed to the United Nations General Assembly by Mikhail Gorbachev saying that the task of strengthening and expanding co-operation among States was vitally important and should be centred on the United Nations system, and that it might therefore be useful to set up a court under United Nations auspices to investigate acts of international terrorism.

25. The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents and the Convention against the Taking of Hostages had been drawn up under the auspices of the United Nations. The Ad Hoc Committee on International Terrorism had done an excellent job. The General Assembly had adopted resolution 40/61 without a vote. The unanimous resolution of the Security Council on international terrorism was also important. However, United Nations potential in that field had not been fully tapped.

26. In that connection, he drew attention to the letter addressed to the Secretary-General dated 23 July 1987 by the Permanent Representatives of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (A/42/416). The authors considered that, in order to enhance the effectiveness of international co-operation against terrorism, an agreement must be reached which embodied unconditional condemnation of international terrorism, strict conformity of any methods of combating terrorism with the principles and norms of international law, respect for the right of peoples to exercise sovereign choice of the course and forms of their development, recognition of their right of self-determination and the legitimacy of the struggle of national liberation movements, non-use of force or the threat of force in international relations, confidence-building among States, participation in existing conventions, co-operation in the conclusion of new agreements and the

(Mr. Ordzhonikidze, USSR)

inevitability of punishment of persons guilty of committing acts of terrorism, including where necessary their extradition. A document of that nature could be drawn up by the Ad Hoc Committee on International Terrorism, if it were reactivated, or by the General Assembly.

27. He supported the Syrian proposal for convening an international conference to define international terrorism, but pointed out that a number of delegations had said that such a conference would only lead to a sterile and politicized debate. While his delegation was aware that it was not easy to define international terrorism, it believed that the existence of a generally acceptable and recognized definition would facilitate the adoption of measures to combat it. That did not mean that action would have to wait until a definition had been found. Practical measures to prevent international terrorism and work on the definition of terrorism were not mutually exclusive.

28. Lastly, his country was ready to co-operate actively with other States for the eradication of international terrorism and would consider any proposal to that end.

29. Mr. AL-MASSRI (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the difficulties raised by the issue under discussion derived from the controversy surrounding it and the differences of opinion and position on it, as well as from the varying objectives pursued by the different approaches to it. If the question was viewed in its proper context, it became clear that what had come to be called international terrorism was in fact the phenomenon of political violence. That was not a new problem for the international community; it went back far beyond 1972, the year in which the question had first been included in the agenda of the General Assembly, and also predated the creation of the League of Nations, under whose auspices a Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism had been drawn up in 1937. The issue was a very old one and had its origins in colonialism - the source of terrorism and racism - which had given rise to various philosophies and methods of State terrorism. The most recent examples of racist and fascist régimes were the Pretoria and Tel Aviv régimes, which currently constituted a source and even a symbol of terrorism. However, that very obvious truth was denied by certain international circles, which were trying to impose erroneous and misleading concepts of terrorism on the peoples of the world who had suffered and continued to suffer as a result of terrorist practices. If one compared the concepts of terrorism prevalent at the beginning of the century with those that some international circles were currently trying to impose, it was clear that the sole purpose of the latter was to hamper the struggle of peoples who were trying to free themselves from the chains of colonialism, under which they had suffered for centuries, and the struggle against fascist and racist régimes. That attitude had prevented the question of terrorism from being dealt with in a reasonable manner, from both the legal and logical standpoints. Numerous studies and seminars had concluded that the problem that was currently being called international terrorism was in fact an inevitable consequence of certain political problems to which the international community had been unable to find just and lasting solutions.

30. The recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on International Terrorism, established in 1979, were very valuable in elucidating the issue. Those



(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab Republic)

recommendations had requested the Security Council and the General Assembly, in order to contribute to the elimination of the causes and the problem of international terrorism, to pay special attention to all situations, including, inter alia, colonialism, racism and situations involving alien occupation, with a view to the application, where feasible and necessary, of the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, including Chapter VII. In its resolution 40/61 of 9 December 1985, the General Assembly had called upon all Member States to observe and implement those recommendations. However, the consistent refusal of certain powerful, influential States to do so, and their attempts to impose upon the international community a misleading interpretation of terrorism, had prevented a reasonable examination of the issue.

31. Careful study of the various stages in the examination of the problem by the United Nations since 1972 would demonstrate clearly that, despite the passage of time and all the painful experiences suffered, those States had not changed their way of thinking. Their method was to try to convince the victims that their rights and freedoms must be infringed, that they must neither complain nor struggle to free themselves and their territories, their culture and their holy places, and that any action taken to that end was an act of terrorism which threatened international stability and friendly relations among States, as well as the security of peoples and individuals. Attempts to impose those erroneous concepts on the United Nations and the mass media were in fact a carefully crafted plan of intellectual terrorism.

32. Such was the case with the Palestinian Arab people, who had been expelled from their land by terrorism and murder and even through persecution outside the occupied territories by Zionist invaders who sought to suppress their revolution and their just struggle. The same had occurred in Lebanon in 1982, and had resulted in the total destruction of that country and the mass extermination and barbaric repression of the peaceful people of that country, as well as of the people of occupied Palestine and the Golan Heights, by Zionist occupation forces. None of that constituted terrorism for those who practised the intellectual terrorism he had mentioned earlier. Nor did the campaigns of mass extermination, persecution and terrorism against the peoples of South Africa, Namibia and the front-line States, the Nicaraguan people and other peoples struggling for their national liberation. Unfortunately, concepts and values were being turned upside down under the constant pressure of that intellectual terrorism. Nevertheless, that pressure frightened no one, nor would it put an end to the struggle for national liberation.

33. The letter addressed to the Secretary-General by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic (A/42/58) said that "the policy of waiting and remaining silent in the face of the feverish attempts to blur the distinctions between terrorism and the legitimate struggle of peoples and to apply a double standard only allows scope for the forces of imperialism and racism to persist in their perfidy and to resort to the pretext of combating terrorism in order to commit aggression against independent States which pursue policies that displease them and do not submit to their pressures. This poses a serious threat to international co-operation, creates a favourable climate for the unlimited use of

(Mr. Al-Masari, Syrian Arab Republic)

force in contravention of the principles of international law, the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and its resolutions and leads to the spread of international terrorism, the aggravation of tension and the jeopardizing of international peace and security. You have no doubt noticed such indications recently in the intensification of disinformation campaigns on the international arena directed against the nature of national struggle and against the States that support it. Some racist and imperialist circles have even gone so far as to portray piracy and State terrorism as an act of self-defence, whereas the peoples of the world consider State terrorism as the worst and most dangerous of all forms of terrorism."

34. The Syrian Arab Republic, inspired by a sense of responsibility and in keeping with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, had proposed (A/42/193) the convening, under United Nations auspices, of an international conference to define terrorism - which must be eradicated - and to differentiate it from the struggle of peoples for national liberation - which must be supported by all available means. The convening of such a conference had been supported by the Meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Non-Aligned Countries held at Brioni, the Fifth Islamic Summit Conference and the Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Countries held in New York, as well as by the Council of the League of Arab States.

35. One of the noble aims of that proposal was to eliminate the confusion deliberately created between terrorism and the peoples' struggle for national liberation. It was a question of stopping the campaign of intimidation, terrorism and deceit waged by certain States and régimes which had so far succeeded in foisting on the world their views on terrorism. According to their unacceptable point of view, the Middle East and South Africa were sources of violence and terrorism. Of course, they were referring not to the racist régimes in Tel Aviv and Pretoria or to the colonial Powers that had generated the causes of terrorism, but to the peoples enduring the yoke of foreign domination and suffering the barbarous fascist practices of terrorism every day.

36. Ben Gurion had written in his diary published in 1983 that it was inappropriate to discuss the grounds for action, and that it was a question of choosing a suitable time and place. It was not enough to destroy a single house; what was needed was a tough and vigorous response. ... The Zionists, he had continued, had had to attack everyone, including women and children, otherwise their reaction would not suffice. When they decided to act, they could not discriminate between the innocent and the guilty. That terrorist philosophy remained the philosophy of zionism in a peace-loving region that had been the cradle of the three main revealed religions and continued to be a source of humanitarian values and reconciliation. With all due respect to their good faith, those who opposed holding the proposed conference were rejecting the possibility of international co-operation based on solid foundations to combat terrorism and were showing a marked inclination to impose their mistaken definitions of terrorism on the international community.

Mr. Al-Massri, Syrian Arab Republic)

37. His delegation considered the problem of terrorism to be not simply a legal question. If all its main aspects were considered, it became apparent that it was a political problem, both in its origins and in its scope and consequences. According to legal norms, terrorists were merciless criminals actuated by personal motives or serving foreign interests. But people fighting for national liberation were not terrorists. Their activities were vouched for by the United Nations Charter and the norms of international law, and they had an inalienable right to struggle against racism and against foreign occupation and domination in order to recover their land. If such people were terrorists, then so were all the outstanding people in history who had fought for liberation. To contend otherwise would be a distortion of historical facts and moral values. The proposal to convene an international conference to define terrorism and to differentiate it from the struggle of peoples for national liberation was an appeal to the conscience of mankind. Holding the conference would put the international community on the right road to fight and put an end to terrorism. Of course, careful preparations would be necessary to ensure its success. His delegation believed that the Ad Hoc Committee on International Terrorism could make such preparations and sincerely hoped that a decision to hold the conference would be taken unanimously, since the aims which it pursued were common to all.

38. Mr. ANSAY (Observer, Organization of the Islamic Conference) said that the phenomenon of terrorism was nothing new. It had existed for centuries in different forms and dimensions, but only in the past decade had its revival attracted close attention. By its resolution 40/61, the General Assembly had condemned as criminal all acts, methods and practices of terrorism wherever and by whomever committed, had invited all States to take all appropriate measures at the national level to harmonize domestic legislation with existing international conventions, and had urged them to contribute to the progressive elimination of the causes underlying international terrorism.

39. It was necessary to find a definition for such a complex, multidimensional phenomenon. The international community and the Organization of the Islamic Conference unequivocally condemned all acts of terrorism. However, a distinction had to be made between acts of terrorism committed by extremist groups or individuals and the legitimate struggle of national liberation movements against oppression and illegal occupation. The struggle of peoples for national liberation, self-determination and independence against oppressive systems and foreign domination was often portrayed as terrorism. Under the pretext of confronting terrorism, many legitimate and authentic liberation movements were being attacked. But in fact, there was a clear difference between acts of terrorism and the struggle of national liberation movements. When South Africa's apartheid system and Israel's military occupation of Palestine and other Arab territories deliberately created the conditions for injustice, violence became inevitable and justifiable. Oppressive occupying Powers seemed to believe that they could act with impunity and terrorize the people under their domination. Yet people who rose against such oppression were condemned as terrorists.

40. A new form of terrorism, namely State terrorism, had sprung up in recent years. Strong and powerful States were using their might against smaller countries

(Mr. Ansay)

in the form of occupation, invasion, subversion and so-called pre-emptive retaliation. Certain well-known circles were disguising the true state of affairs by charging Islam with having a special propensity towards terrorism. Islam was a religion of peace and had never preached or promoted acts of terror or violence. At its Fifth Islamic Summit Conference, held in Kuwait from 26 to 29 January 1987, the Organization of the Islamic Conference had adopted two resolutions on terrorism (A/42/178, annex II). Resolution 19/5-P (IS) categorically condemned all acts and forms of international terrorism as a violation of Islamic teachings, condemned the use of terrorism as an instrument of foreign policy, called upon Member States to refuse to support terrorists either directly or indirectly and declared the readiness of the Islamic States to co-operate with other members of the international community to eliminate the phenomenon of international terrorism. Resolution 20/5-P (IS) supported the idea of convening an international conference sponsored by the United Nations to establish the difference between terrorism and the struggle of peoples for their inalienable national causes and for the liberation of their territories.

41. Under the auspices of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, an international seminar on the phenomenon of terrorism in the contemporary world and its impact on individual security, political stability and international peace had been held in Geneva from 23 to 25 June 1987. The seminar had brought together internationally known jurists, political thinkers, experts and representatives from many States. Twenty-two papers on various facets of terrorism had been presented to the seminar, the report of which had been distributed as document A/42/564.

42. The Organization of the Islamic Conference was ready to support efforts within the United Nations system to deal with the phenomenon of terrorism and urged the early convening, under United Nations auspices, of an international conference to define terrorism and to distinguish it from the struggle of oppressed peoples for national liberation.

43. Ms. CHOKRON (Israel) said that controversy and confusion were invading the discussions and there would probably be speeches attacking her country every day. Some countries were pursuing their political struggle against Israel under the pretext of combating terrorism. Out of respect for the Committee, whose task was to discuss legal matters, her delegation would reveal its position when making its statement.

44. Mr. AL-MASSRI (Syrian Arab Republic) expressed surprise at the audacity of the representative of Israel in defending the terrorist régime and accusing its victims of terrorism, but said that he had no wish to reply to the statement made by the representative of the Zionist occupation régime in Palestine.

The meeting rose at noon.