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INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE DAVANTI LA SESTA COMMISSIONE DELL'ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELL'ONU SULLE MISURE PER ELIMINARE IL TERRORISMO INTERNAZIONALE

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Pubblichiamo di seguito l'intervento che l'Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede, l'Arcivescovo Celestino Migliore, Nunzio Apostolico, ha pronunciato ieri a New York, davanti la sesta Commissione della 61a Assemblea Generale dell'ONU sul punto 100 riguardante le misure per eliminare il terrorismo internazionale:

• INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. CELESTINO MIGLIORE

Mr Chairman,

In recent years, terrorism has developed into a sophisticated network of political, economic and technical collusion which crosses national borders to embrace the whole world. Because the stakes are so high and concern us all, there is hardly any need to illustrate the importance of an internationally binding Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

My delegation believes that in the debate aimed at adopting a Convention, it is fundamental to affirm from the very outset that effective counter-terrorism measures and the protection of human rights are not conflicting goals. Indeed, the former must serve the latter, because the protection of human rights is the primary objective of any counter-terrorism strategy. The absolute unacceptability of terrorism lies precisely in the fact that it uses innocent people as means to obtain its ends, thus showing contempt and utter disregard for human life and dignity. This disregard for life reaches the point of cynically using innocent individuals and entire populations as human shields to hide and protect terrorists and their weapons.

Moreover, counter-terrorism strategy must not sacrifice fundamental human rights in the name of security. Rather, it must refrain from selective implementation of measures; otherwise, it would corrode the very values that it intends to protect, alienate large parts of the world population and diminish the moral strength of such a strategy. Terrorists must never be allowed to point to this kind of deficiency on the part of states for their actions, because it can only dignify in the eyes of some the grievances they claim justify their aberrant behaviour. On the other hand, not even the terrorists' contempt for human life and dignity can justify denying them treatment

according to international humanitarian and human rights norms.

Because legality and juridical certainty are at the core of the defence of human rights, the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism should make clear that no cause, no matter how just, can excuse or legitimize the deliberate killing or maiming of civilian populations. Even the legitimate right to resist unjust authorities and the right to self-determination and national liberation, must not threaten social fabric and domestic public order, neither of which should normally be considered acts of war or illegitimate oppression.

Terrorism is a cultural manifestation --- in the sense of being anti-culture and anti-civilization --- of warped perceptions of reality, of xenophobic complexes, of contempt for the other, of seeing the other as a threat, of cynical abuse of religion. Faced with such a phenomenon, legal measures and arms are not sufficient; we must respond also with cultural instruments capable of convincing that non-violent alternatives to redress genuine grievances exist. History offers examples of non-violent struggle that were able to rectify unjust systems and structures, and redress just grievances in an effective and lasting manner.

Such success stories also remind us that the fight against terrorism must include a courageous and resolute political, diplomatic and economic commitment to relieve situations of oppression and marginalization which facilitate the designs of terrorists. It is widely recognized that the recruitment of terrorists is easier in situations where rights are trampled and injustices tolerated over extended periods of time. Still, it must be firmly stated that the injustices existing in the world can never be used to excuse acts of terrorism, and it should be noted that the victims of the radical breakdown of order which terrorism seeks to achieve include above all the countless millions of men and women who are least able to withstand a collapse of international solidarity. The terrorist's claim to be acting on behalf of the poor is a patent falsehood.

In particular, religions and interreligious dialogue have a fundamental role to play in contrasting the terrorists' preaching of hate and violence as antithetical to authentic religion, in promoting a culture of peace and mutual respect, and in helping people with grievances to opt for non-violent means. This grave duty falls upon religions, but States and the family of nations can help by fostering an environment in which religions and interfaith dialogue can flourish.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

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