

Chair's Statement to the Security Council, 27 October 2015

Introduction

Mr. President,

In my June briefing to the Council, I outlined how the threat from Al-Qaida and its associates has evolved over the previous year. I also addressed how the Committee has responded to this evolving threat.

Since then, the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team has presented two reports to the Committee. The first, pursuant to resolution 2214, on the threat posed by Al-Qaida and associated groups in Libya, in particular ISIL (also known as Da'esh) and Ansar Al Charia. The second, on the impact of the measures introduced in resolution 2199 against ISIL, and the Al-Nusrah Front. Findings from these reports form the basis of my briefing today. I will also make some additional remarks on the Committee's general work.

The threat in Libya

Mr. President,

The Monitoring Team presented its report on the terrorism threat in Libya to the Committee on 12 October. Due to a delay in translation, I understand the report will be available as a UN document at the beginning of November. The Committee has also agreed several actions based on recommendations made by the Monitoring Team in its report.

In advance of the report's circulation, I will limit myself to a few key observations. The report concluded that while the threat from Al-Qaida and its associates, including ISIL in Libya, is not new, the current situation signals a potentially increasing level of threat. Libya presents fertile ground for Al-Qaida-associated groups to opportunistically exploit and complicate an already difficult situation.

Libya is also strategically valuable to such terrorist groups. Its geographic location in Africa and proximity to Southern Europe is important. It is also a gate to the African desert stretching to a number of African countries, and it has significant oil resources, widespread availability of arms and weak internal security. Unsurprisingly, Libya continues to attract significant numbers of foreign terrorist fighters from the Middle East and North Africa.

Mr. President,

The report concludes that ISIL in Libya has so far been the only known ISIL affiliate that benefits from support and guidance by ISIL in Syria and Iraq. The report further notes that ISIL, with an estimated strength of 2,000-3,000 fighters, is an evident short and long term threat. ISIL's central command in Iraq and Syria views Libya as a good opportunity to expand its so-called caliphate. It controls territory in and around Sirte and has terrorist cells in several Libyan cities, including Derna, clearly demonstrating an intention to control additional territory. It has been able to perpetrate attacks in many other parts of the country. Several of the individuals involved in these attacks, and senior ISIL leadership in Libya, have not yet been designated. To extend the reach of sanctions measures, including to these individuals, Member States need to provide further listing proposals to the Committee.

There are some moderating factors on the threat from ISIL in Libya. Currently ISIL lacks popular support and is seen by locals as a foreign terrorist organisation not embedded in their communities. ISIL in Libya is therefore very dependent on incoming and returning foreign terrorist fighters for support.

The Committee would like to remind Member States that Advanced Passenger Information or API can facilitate detection of the movement of individuals listed on the Al-Qaida Sanctions List. Member States need to exercise vigilance in relation to travel of individuals to Libya. As Chair, I will liaise with relevant stakeholders on the possibility of a joint meeting to analyse any capacity gaps in Libya including border control issues, and discuss ways to address these gaps.

Finally on Libya, the report notes that long-standing regional terrorist organisations, such as Ansar Al-Charia, in particular Ansar Al-Charia Derna, seem to have weakened since the establishment of ISIL. However, these groups continue to operate and use Libya as a base.

The impact of measures imposed in resolution 2199 (2015)

Mr. President,

The Monitoring Team presented to the Committee in August its assessment of the impact of the measures introduced in resolution 2199. A Chair's summary of the assessment was circulated to the Council on 25 September and can be found on the Committee's website. The Committee has also agreed several actions based on the Monitoring Team's recommendations. These are largely aimed at raising awareness of threats posed by ISIL and ANF, particularly around financing, and suggest ways Member States and the private sector could implement the required measures.

The measures introduced in resolution 2199 to inhibit financing of ISIL and ANF, focused on eliminating the key revenue streams, namely: oil smuggling, antiquities looting and trafficking, kidnap for ransom and illicit donations.

The Monitoring Team assessed that resolution 2199 had an effect in raising awareness of the need for concerted Member State action, particularly in the areas of ISIL's smuggling of antiquities and accessing of the international financial system.

However, the Monitoring Team identified a series of major challenges that have complicated effective implementation of the measures. These include the difficulty of identifying the origin of seized crude oil and antiquities. The Monitoring Team further noted that it is premature to make a full assessment of the impact of resolution 2199 only five months after the adoption of the resolution.

To assist, the Committee produced a note, also available on the Committee's website, which outlines these challenges and provides some suggested solutions. At the Committee's direction, the Monitoring Team is currently preparing a technical assistance note for business entities, on oil and antiquities smuggling by ISIL. Other agreed Committee actions, such as the production of a voluntary self-assessment tool and outreach with humanitarian actors, are forthcoming.

General update

I would also like to provide you with three short updates on the work of the Committee more generally.

First, in September, the Al-Qaida Sanctions List expanded with the inclusion of 20 more names, mostly those related to ISIL. This reflects the growing threat posed by ISIL and efforts by Member States to propose designations. The Al-Qaida Sanctions List now contains 247 individuals and 74 entities.

Second, the new Ombudsperson for the 1267 sanctions regime, Ms. Catherine Marchi-Uhel, commenced her important responsibilities in early July. There have also been some changes within the Monitoring Team's composition. I would like to acknowledge the Team's hard work, under the leadership of Acting Coordinator, Hans Jacob-Schindler, which has been both timely and high quality.

Finally, I plan to convene another open briefing for interested Member States in November. As with the open briefing held in April this year, I intend for this to be an informal, interactive discussion about the work of the Committee. I encourage interested Member States to participate and contact the Chair or Committee in advance about issues on which you would like to be briefed. We expect this discussion to be particularly useful ahead of the mandate review for the 1267 Sanctions regime in December this year.

Conclusion

In conclusion Mr President, it is important for the international community to provide support to Libya and its neighbours in the struggle against Al-Qaida, ISIL and their associates. Countering ISIL and the Al-Nusrah Front in Iraq and Syria must also remain a high priority of the Security Council and its members. For the success of our common endeavour, it is critical that we encourage all Member States to fully implement, support and promote the measures adopted by this body.

Thank you, Mr. President.