

**ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM (ARF) STATEMENT  
ON PREVENTING AND COUNTERING TERRORISM AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM  
CONDUCTIVE TO TERRORISM (VECT)  
(Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand)**

**REAFFIRMING** that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security and that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable regardless of their motivations, whenever, wherever and by whomsoever committed, and remaining determined to contribute further to enhancing the effectiveness of the overall effort to fight this scourge on a global level,

**STRESSING** that human rights and the rule of law should be upheld in preventing and countering terrorism and VECT in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and applicable rules of international law, and consistent with relevant UN Resolutions, as well as the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy adopted by UN General Assembly in 2006, and that the international community should take the necessary steps to enhance collective efforts at local, national, regional and international levels to fully implement relevant UN Resolutions, as well as the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy,

**STRESSING** that terrorism can only be defeated by a sustained and comprehensive approach involving the active participation and collaboration of all States and international and regional organizations in partnership with civil society and the private sector, when appropriate to prevent, impede, impair, isolate, and incapacitate the terrorist threat, while acknowledging the leading role and responsibility of States and their competent agencies in preventing and countering terrorism and VECT at the local, national, regional and international levels and the critical need for a “whole of society” approach.

**ALARMED** by the acts of terrorism and VECT in various parts of the world including in the region, which claim innocent lives, cause destruction and displace people,

**UNDERLINING** that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality and or civilization,

**REAFFIRMING** that ARF Participants should ensure that any measures taken to counter terrorism are in accordance with their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law, and international humanitarian law;

**UNDERSCORING** that respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law are complementary and mutually reinforcing with effective counter-terrorism measures, are an essential part of a successful counter-terrorism effort and noting the importance of respect for the rule of law so as to effectively prevent and counter terrorism,

**NOTING** with concern that terrorists craft distorted narratives, which are utilised to recruit supporters and foreign terrorist fighters, mobilise resources, and garner support from sympathisers, in particular by using information and communications technologies (ICTs), including the internet and social media, for terrorist purposes,

**CONSIDERING** the scale and complexity of the terrorist threat faced by the Asia-Pacific region which continues to grow with the influx of returning or relocating foreign terrorist fighters, recruitment of new fighters and cross border movement of terrorists,

**REAFFIRMING** the significant role of ARF as one of the main multilateral forums for political and security dialogue in the region which supports ASEAN Centrality in the ARF,

**RECOGNISING** the 2010 Hanoi Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN Regional Forum Vision Statement which envisions ARF by 2020 will be able to develop an effective network for regional law enforcement and military agencies to build regional capacity, share information, and individually and collectively respond in a timely and effective manner to the threats posed by terrorism and transnational organised crime in the region,

**RECALLING** the 2007 ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism, the 2017 ASEAN Comprehensive Plan of Action on Counter Terrorism, and the 2017 Manila Declaration to Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism,

**NOTING** the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (2018-2025) as adopted by the 12<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime on 31 October 2018 in Naypyidaw, Myanmar,

**RECALLING** UNSCR 2178 (2014), which encourages engagement, with local communities and non-governmental actors in developing strategies to counter terrorist and VECT narrative, including by empowering youth, women, religious, cultural and education leaders, and other concerned groups of civil society and adopt tailored approaches to countering recruitment and promoting social inclusion,

**RECALLING** UNSCR 2396 (2017), which focuses on foreign terrorist fighters returning from conflict zones and builds on UNSCR 2178 (2014), which expresses grave concern over the acute and growing threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters, namely individuals who travel to a State other than their States of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning, or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts or the providing or receiving of terrorist training, including in connection with armed conflict, and in this regard noting that the threat of foreign terrorist fighters may affect all regions and States, even those far from conflict zones,

**RECALLING** also that UNSCR 2396 (2017) emphasises that women and children associated with returning foreign terrorist fighters may have served in many different roles, including as supporters, facilitators, or perpetrators of terrorist acts, and require special focus when developing tailored prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies,

**EXPRESSING** concern about the danger of recruitment and radicalisation to terrorism, including in prisons and online,

**UNDERLINING** the importance of strengthening international and regional cooperation, in addressing the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters, including strengthening transnational information sharing on associated terrorist movements, border security,

criminal investigations and judicial processes, including extradition and addressing conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, and countering the spread of terrorist and VECT ideology and propaganda and incitement to commit terrorist acts, preventing radicalisation to terrorism and recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters, disrupting, preventing financial support to foreign terrorist fighters, developing and implementing risks assessments on returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters and their families, and prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration efforts, consistent with applicable international and domestic laws,

**EMPHASIZING** the importance of domestic agencies and international assistance and cooperation, consistent with applicable international and domestic laws, to support our efforts aimed at effectively bringing to justice, extraditing, or prosecuting any person who supports, facilitates, participates or attempts to participate in the financing and fundraising, planning, facilitation, or commission of terrorist acts, and at denying terrorist safe havens,

**STRESSING** the importance of the development and maintenance of effective, fair, humane, transparent and accountable criminal justice systems in accordance with applicable international law as a fundamental basis of any strategy to prevent and counter terrorism and VECT,

**RECOGNISING** that foreign terrorist fighters may be travelling with family members underscoring the need for ARF Participants to assess and as appropriate, investigate such family members for any potential involvement in criminal or terrorist activities, including by employing individualised risk and needs assessments, and to take appropriate action consistent with applicable international and domestic laws and noting that children are especially vulnerable to being socialised to violence and therefore may be in need of particular social support, such as post-trauma counseling, while stressing that children need to be treated in a manner that respects their rights and dignity, in accordance with applicable international law,

**RECOGNISING** the need to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, and the drivers of VECT, both internal and external, while ensuring national ownership in accordance with applicable international and domestic laws,

**REITERATING** the need to consider engaging, where appropriate, with religious authorities, community leaders and other civil society actors, who have relevant expertise in countering narratives used by terrorists, including foreign terrorist fighters, and their supporters,

**AFFIRMING** the importance of education as a tool to help to prevent terrorism and VECT,

**Do hereby:**

1. Call upon ARF Participants to cooperate and support each other in efforts to prevent and counter terrorism and VECT;

2. Urge ARF Participants to intensify efforts to effectively implement UNSCRs 1373 (2001), 1624 (2005), 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014), 2242 (2015), 2309 (2016), 2341 (2017), 2354 (2017), and 2396 (2017), and 2462 (2019), as well as the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy;
3. Call upon ARF Participants to continue to take measures, consistent with international law, including applicable international human rights law, international refugee law, and international humanitarian law to address all drivers conducive to terrorism, both internal and external, in a balanced manner as set out in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy;
4. Stress the significance of a sustained and comprehensive approach, including through stronger efforts, where necessary, to address conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, by enhancing collaboration, consistent with applicable international and domestic laws, with relevant key stakeholders such as the private sector and civil society, to promote a culture of prevention and to counter the ideological challenges of terrorism and terrorist narratives and propaganda, including through the use of ICTs with the view to support, foster and contribute to local, national, regional and global efforts against terrorism;
5. Call upon ARF Participants to engage with domestic financial institutions and share information on terrorist financing risks to provide greater context for their work in identifying potential terrorist financing activity through multiple authorities and channels, including law enforcement, intelligence, security services and financial intelligence units, underscoring in this context the essential role of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in setting global standards for preventing and combatting terrorist financing, of its Global Network of FATF-style regional bodies, while taking note with appreciation of the “FATF Consolidated Strategy on Combatting Terrorist Financing” and its operational plan and also call upon ARF Participants to improve the integration and utilisation of financial intelligence to more effectively counter terrorist financing threats;
6. Call upon ARF Participants to adopt such measures as may be necessary and appropriate, in accordance with their obligations under international law and relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, to deny safe havens to persons who support or engage in terrorism, including by prosecuting such persons, as appropriate, and to cooperate at the international level;
7. Emphasise that tolerance, pluralism, respect for diversity, dialogue among civilizations and the enhancement of interfaith and intercultural dialogue and respect among peoples, including at the national, regional and global levels, while avoiding the escalation of hatred, are among the most important elements in promoting cooperation, in preventing terrorism and in countering VECT, and welcome the various initiatives in the region to this end;
8. Urge all ARF Participants to unite against VECT and encourage efforts aimed at countering incitement and recruitment to commit terrorist acts, and effective criminal investigation and prosecution of any person who supports, facilitates, participates or

attempts to participate in the financing and fundraising, planning, perpetration, or commission of terrorist acts, or provides safe havens;

9. Encourage ARF Participants to promote community-based discussion on the drivers of VECT and to develop strategies to address them, and underline that States, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, religious bodies, academia, civil society, the private sector and the media play an important role in promoting tolerance and facilitating dialogue and respect for religious, political and cultural diversity and human rights;
10. Express concern at the increase in incidents of kidnapping and hostage-taking committed by terrorist groups, for any purpose, including with the aim of raising funds or gaining political concessions, notes that ransoms paid to terrorists are used as one of the sources of funding for their activities, including further kidnappings, call upon ARF Participants to prevent terrorists from benefiting from ransom payments and political concessions and to secure the safe release of hostages, in accordance with applicable international and domestic laws, and encourage ARF Participants to cooperate, as appropriate, when responding to incidents of kidnapping and hostage-taking committed by terrorist groups;
11. Express concern that terrorists continue to use information and communications technologies (ICTs), in particular the Internet and social media, for terrorist purposes, including to commit, incite, radicalize and recruit for, fund or plan terrorist acts, and encourage ARF Participants to urge online platforms to step up the ambition and pace of their efforts to prevent terrorist and VECT content from being streamed, uploaded, or re-uploaded;
12. Stress to this end, that it is essential to address the threat posed by terrorist and VECT ideology and propaganda to incite and recruit individuals to commit terrorist acts, and in this regard, the ARF Participants should continue to develop an accurate understanding of how terrorists recruit and motivate others to commit terrorist acts and develop the most effective means to counter terrorist propaganda and to develop effective alternative narratives in collaboration with civil society partners, including through the Internet, in compliance with applicable international and domestic laws, while promoting an open, reliable and secure internet;
13. Encourage ARF Participants, to consider instituting mechanisms to involve youth in the promotion of a culture of peace, tolerance and intercultural and interreligious dialogue and develop, as appropriate, an understanding of respect for human dignity, pluralism and diversity, including, as appropriate, through education programmes that could discourage their participation in acts of terrorism, VECT, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination;
14. Encourage also ARF Participants to promote the positive role of youth through the promotion of media and information literacy and considering practical ways to include youth in the development of relevant programmes and initiatives aimed at preventing VECT, and urge ARF Participants to take effective measures, in conformity with

international and domestic laws, to protect young people affected or exploited by terrorism or VECT;

15. Call upon ARF Participants, to highlight the important role of women in countering terrorism and VECT, and urge ARF Participants to consider the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women's enjoyment of their human rights and on women's organization while taking into account national perspectives;
16. Call upon also ARF Participants, in accordance with their obligations under international law, to cooperate in efforts to address the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters, including by preventing and countering radicalisation and recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters, preventing foreign terrorist fighters from crossing their borders, disrupting and preventing financial support to foreign terrorist fighters, and implementing, repatriation, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies as part of their national counter-terrorism strategies for returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters accompanying and in this regard encourage ARF Participants to develop effective strategies to deal with returnees, in accordance with relevant international obligations and national law;
17. Urge ARF Participants to provide full coordination and afford one another the greatest measure of assistance, in accordance with their obligations under international law, in criminal investigations or criminal proceedings relating to the financing or support of terrorism for any purpose, regardless of against whose citizens terrorist acts are committed, including by sharing evidence useable in courts of justice to support proceedings involving terrorist organizations, terrorist entities or foreign terrorist fighters, and urge all ARF Participants to cooperate fully in the fight against terrorism, encouraging the enhancement of their efforts to strengthen implementation of existing extradition and mutual legal assistance mechanisms, including where applicable, on the basis of obligations to extradite or prosecute under applicable international counter-terrorism conventions and domestic laws;
18. Encourage ARF Participants to promote the participation of women in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of these strategies for addressing returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters and their accompanying families;
19. Acknowledge that, given their potential status as victims of terrorism, every child alleged as, accused of or recognised as having violated the law, particularly those who are deprived of their liberty, as well as child victims and witnesses of crimes, should be treated in a manner consistent with his or her rights, dignity and needs, in accordance with applicable international law, including any international obligations relevant to the administration of justice, urge ARF Participants to take appropriate measures to effectively reintegrate children formerly associated with terrorist groups, in accordance with domestic law in each State;
20. Encourage ARF Participants to engage relevant local communities and non-governmental actors, where appropriate, in developing tailored strategies to counter terrorist and VECT ideology and propaganda that can incite recruitment to terrorist groups to prevent the commission of terrorist acts, to address the conditions

conducive to the spread of terrorism and VECT, and to share experience and best practices on the protection of critical infrastructure from terrorist attacks;

21. Stress the need to continue to provide tangible capacity-building assistance to ARF Participants in prevention and counter-terrorism matters, and recognise in this regard the need to contribute more resources for capacity-building projects, upon request, and to this end encourage ASEAN mechanisms, ASEAN led-mechanisms and ASEAN Dialogue Partners to coordinate and integrate their work in preventing and countering terrorism and VECT;
22. Welcome the adoption of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Work Plan on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime 2019 – 2021 which among others focuses on prioritising the region's effort to prevent and counter terrorism and VECT, look forward to the effective implementation of the Work Plan, and request ARF Participants to contribute to the Work Plan.

**Adopted on the Second of August in the Year Two Thousand and Nineteen (2019)  
at the 26<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Regional Forum in Bangkok, Thailand**

Statement ends