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**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
PARLIAMENT HOUSE
NEW DELHI**

**REPORT ON THE SUBJECT ‘COUNTERING GLOBAL TERRORISM AT
REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS’**

The Committee on External Affairs headed by Shri P.P. Chaudhary presented their Twenty Eighth Report on the Subject ‘Countering Global Terrorism at Regional and International Levels’ today, i.e. 5th February, 2024.

**SOME OF THE IMPORTANT OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS
ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

1. Stepping up diplomatic efforts for reaching an Agreement on the draft CCIT urged.

1.71 The Committee have noted that despite efforts by the international community, including those led by the UN Security Council, terrorism continues to remain the gravest threat to humanity. The threat of terrorism is also expanding at a rapid pace into new areas, particularly in Asia and Africa. Aerial terrorism is gradually emerging as a potent form of terrorism while the share of digital mode of terror financing also increases. The Committee, have however, noted that there is no universally accepted definition of terrorism or global terrorist or terrorist

activities. India had proposed the adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) to the UN General Assembly in 1996, but a consensus could not be achieved so far due to the position taken by some member countries on qualifying the definition of terrorism. The Committee understand that several countries have expressed support for CCIT and the leaders of prominent multilateral groupings—NAM, BRICS and SCO have called for an early finalization of CCIT. The Committee are of the firm view that a comprehensive and coordinated approach is the need of the hour for countering global terrorism, especially as terrorists are increasingly making use of advancements in technologies to achieve their vicious goals. It also goes without saying that a formal Convention within the UN Counter Terrorism Architecture would be the most appropriate forum to start with. The Committee, have therefore, urged the Ministry to step up its diplomatic efforts at multilateral, regional and bilateral levels stressing the need for the international community to reach an agreement on the draft text of the CCIT at the earliest. The Government may also take initiatives for a global counterterrorism movement focusing on abuse of new and emerging technologies like internet, social media platforms, encrypted messaging services, crypto currencies, unmanned aerial vehicles/drones, etc. for preventing and neutralizing terrorist threats and activities.

(Recommendation No. 1)

2. Strengthening and Intensifying collective global efforts against GTGs desired.

1.72 The Committee have noted that Global Terrorist Groups (GTGs) such as ISIS and Al Qaida are highly dependent on the encrypted messaging platforms for instructions and preparations of terror attacks, revival of their sleeper cells and have heavily made use of crowd funding and virtual currencies like bitcoins for terror financing. In addition to instigating lone wolf attacks, GTGs also radicalize youth through misinformation and false narrative *via* extensive use of social media platforms. The global response to GTGs includes passing of UN Resolutions, designation as terrorists, inclusion in the FATF grey and black list, prohibition of accesses of advanced technologies in the hands of terrorist, bilateral/joint operation in investigation of terror related cases, etc. Despite counter terrorism efforts across the globe, GTGs remain as a major challenge for global peace and security. In view of the threat to the global community and to humanity at large, the Committee have desired that collective global efforts against GTGs should be strengthened and intensified through active coordination and effective implementation of the various UN resolutions and strict adherence to FATF norms

for restricting the source of their financing. The Committee have also urged the Government to initiate vigorous campaigns for collective action against these terrorist groups to prevent them from building capabilities to carry out terrorist attacks and disturbing global peace and security.

(Recommendation No.2)

3. Need to evolve a comprehensive international convention to counter the use of ICTs for criminal purposes stressed.

1.73 The Committee are of the view that a multifaceted approach involving the active participation of stakeholders including global cyber security and law enforcement organizations at regional and international levels is imperative to counter global cyber terrorism. The Committee, have therefore, stressed the need for the Government to make persistent efforts at the UN Ad Hoc Committee and work towards deeper cooperation amongst UN member countries so that a comprehensive international convention to counter the use of ICTs for criminal purposes is evolved at the earliest. The Committee have also urged the Government to take initiatives for promoting regional and international cooperation in developing joint strategies, cyber threat intelligence sharing mechanisms, cross border initiatives, capacity building etc. to combat cyber terrorism.

(Recommendation No.3)

4. India to play a prominent role for preventing the spread of radicalization and extremist ideology.

1.75 The Committee have noted that regional and global terrorist organizations around the world have increasingly been using radicalization as tool to attract vulnerable sections of the society like impressionable youth. Radicalization has been taken as a central theme in the meetings of multilateral bodies like UN CTC, GCTF, SCO-RATs, etc. The GCTF has shared Best Practices on the issues of countering violent extremism and counter radicalization measures have been taken up in SAN-PVE and Colombo Security Conclaves. Project based collaboration has been started by EU countries to foster exchange and cooperation in prevention of radicalization. The Committee have further noted that various initiatives are underway by multilateral organizations like GIFCT, EU etc., for cyber patrolling to prevent misuse of internet by terrorists to spread radicalization. Trail of Dedicated Institution based mechanism in the vulnerable areas are also undergoing. The Committee are aware of the challenges being faced by India due to radical and extremist thoughts influencing the populace, particularly the youth and have desired that the Government should be proactive and maintain close coordination

with multilateral and regional bodies engaged in the prevention and spread of radicalization. India should also play a prominent role in working out/evolving counter radicalization measures and institution based mechanisms in collaboration with the international community for preventing the spread of radicalization and extremist ideology.

(Recommendation No.5)

5. Government urged to make coordinated efforts for evolving a global regulatory consensus on bitcoin.

1.76 The Committee have noted that virtual currency, online payment and dark web transactions have attracted great attention from terrorist organizations. As per the report of the Financial Action Task Force(FATF) on Money Laundering entitled ‘Emerging Terrorism Financing Risks,’ virtual currencies such as, Bitcoin, has increasingly been used in various illegal and criminal activities, facilitating money laundering and terrorist financing. The Committee are aware of the rapid stride in financial technology innovation by terrorists/terrorist groups and have desired that the Government should work in close coordination with FATF and other bodies to bring about qualitative improvement in the regulatory capacity so that terrorists/terrorist organizations do not get new opportunity for financing of terrorism and related activities. Underlining the need to evolve a global regulatory consensus on bitcoin, the Committee have urged the Government to make coordinated efforts amongst the global community in this regard.

(Recommendation No.6)

6. Government to extend all support and cooperation towards establishing a legally binding protocol and compliance and verification mechanism for BWC and CWC.

1.78 The Committee have noted that potential threat from Chemical, Radiological, Biological and Nuclear (CRBN) includes use of CRBN materials by non state actors in the form of dirty bombs, dispersal devices and bio weapons. India actively participates in the discussions at the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention aimed at preventing or mitigating the proliferation of biological or chemical weapons to non state actors. The Committee have further noted that in the 9th Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference held in Geneva from 28 November–16 December 2022, it was decided to establish a Working Group open to all States Parties to identify, examine and develop specific and effective measures, including possible legally-binding measures and make recommendations to strengthen and institutionalize the

Convention in all its aspects. The Committee have desired that the Government should extend all support and cooperation towards establishing a legally binding protocol and compliance and verification mechanism for the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention to check the proliferation of biological and chemical weapons in the hands of terrorists. The Committee have also desired that India should closely cooperate and collaborate with the UN and its relevant Committees/agencies as well as the member States in preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

(Recommendation No.8)

7. **Action plan/mechanism to root out terrorist networks and safe havens in the neighbouring countries recommended.**

1.79 The Committee have noted that the problem of terrorism in India is largely sponsored from across the border. Terrorist outfits are provided safe havens, material support, finance and other logistics by Pakistan's ISI to carry out terrorist activities in India. The Committee are of the firm view that terrorist attacks in the country can only be curbed by dismantling all terrorist networks and safe havens and have recommended that an action plan/mechanism may be worked out at the earliest for effective sharing of resources, capacity enhancement and pooling of available experts of the Central agencies as well as coordinated global efforts to root out terrorist networks and safe havens in the neighbouring countries.

(Recommendation No. 9)

8. **Joint Action Plan to curb the use of drones, virtual currencies and encrypted communications by terrorists to be worked out.**

1.81 The Committee acknowledge the important steps taken by the Government in providing legal framework to check the use of drones, virtual currencies and encrypted communications by terrorists but have further desired that collaborative efforts amongst different Ministries and agencies should be strengthened and enforcement of existing laws should be strictly monitored to ensure its effective implementation. Efforts may also be made at various bilateral, regional and multilateral fora to work out a Joint Action Plan to curb the use of drones, virtual currencies and encrypted communications by terrorists.

(Recommendation No. 11)

9. **MEA and Indian Missions abroad urged to facilitate signing of MoUs between CERT-In and CERTs of other countries.**

1.82 The Committee have noted that CERT-In has also entered into cooperation agreements in the area of cyber security with CERTs of 11 countries, viz, Bangladesh, Brazil, Egypt, Estonia, France, Israel, Japan, Maldives, Nigeria, Uzbekistan and Vietnam. The Committee have further noted that such MoUs have also been signed at the industry level. Keeping in view the fact that cyber attacks have become a global phenomenon, the Committee feel that greater global cooperation on cyber security is needed and have urged the Government to secure the participation of all the countries in this regard. The Committee have also urged the MEA and Indian Missions abroad to facilitate signing of such MoUs between CERT-In and CERTs of other countries as well as MoUs at the industry level.

(Recommendation No. 12)

10. **Need for being proactive and not merely reactive towards cyber/malware attacks stressed.**

1.83 The Committee have further noted that negotiations are ongoing with ICANN for setting up cluster of internet root servers in India. The Committee have desired that the negotiations should be concluded at the earliest so that internet root servers are based in India to enable immediate response to cyber/malware attacks and contain/check such attacks at the ISP gateways itself. In view of the increasing incidents of cyber/malware attacks perpetrated by terrorists/terrorist organizations, the Committee have stressed the need to be proactive and not merely reactive towards such incidents and have urged the Government to evolve a strong mechanism for collaborative efforts amongst the agencies concerned. The capabilities of these agencies to counter cyber/malware attacks in the country may also be enhanced.

(Recommendation No. 13)

11. **Government to strengthen the collection and sharing of financial intelligence through effective networking of FIUs at national, regional and international levels.**

1.85 The Committee have noted that India's Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU-IND), responsible for coordinating and strengthening the efforts of national and international intelligence, investigation and enforcement agencies in pursuing the global efforts against money laundering and terrorist financing has signed 48 agreements with its counterpart FIUs of other countries for exchange of financial intelligence. The Committee are aware of the increasing use of internet technology, virtual currency, online transactions, etc. by terrorists/terrorist groups and have desired that the Government should maintain active coordination with the FIUs of other countries to ensure seamless flow of financial intelligence so as to prevent money laundering and financing of terrorism in the country. The Government should also explore the opportunity of signing more agreements with the remaining countries and constantly work towards strengthening the collection and sharing of financial intelligence through effective networking of FIUs at national, regional and international levels.

(Recommendation No. 15)

12. **Creation of a pool of dedicated experts for new and emerging technologies desired.**

2.56 The Committee have further noted that due to emerging challenges in counter terrorism domain with increasing use of technology, drones, misuse of internet by terrorists, crypto transactions, use of encrypted communication platforms and social media by terrorists, India's counter terrorism mechanism has been evolving continuously in terms of amendments in legislations, facilities and equipments for Law Enforcement Agencies, technological up-gradation, skill enhancement of personnel, etc. The Committee acknowledge the efforts made by the Government to upgrade its counter terrorism apparatus but have stressed the need for continuous review of such mechanisms to keep pace with new and emerging challenges in the counter terrorism domain such as aerial terrorism, encrypted messaging services, digital mode of terror financing, etc. Going by the *modus operandi* of global terrorist groups, the Committee have desired that the Government should keep one step ahead and create a pool of dedicated experts for new and emerging technologies, cyber related matters and financial technology innovation in coordination with all the Ministries/Departments /Agencies concerned.

(Recommendation No. 19)

13. **Government to consider pitching for a uniform Convention on Extradition at the United Nations.**

2.59 The Committee understand that extradition treaty is one of the legal frameworks for combating transnational crimes and terrorism. India has signed extradition treaties with 50 countries (treaties with Kazakhstan and Morocco are yet to be ratified) while extradition arrangements are in place with another 12 countries. The Committee hope that these treaties would serve as an effective tool to secure cooperation and assistance to enable India in countering terrorism, organized crimes, drug trafficking, money laundering, counterfeiting of its currency notes, etc. The Committee are also aware that successful operation of extradition treaties hinge upon harmonious working relations between the signatory countries and have desired that the Government should work towards strengthening its diplomatic ties and maintaining closer cooperation with each one of them. The scope for signing more extradition treaties with other countries may be assessed and concrete steps taken in that direction. Despite the challenges in arriving at a consensus in the United Nations, the Committee have recommended that the Government should consider pitching for a uniform Convention on Extradition at the United Nations.

(Recommendation No. 22)

14. A comprehensive assessment of the working of JWG's on CT and regional bodies and preparation of an action plan to make them more effective recommended.

2.61 The Committee while acknowledging all the efforts made by the Government, have desired that in view of India's continued vulnerability to terrorism and its consequences, the Government should improve its counter terrorism strategy by incorporating best practices on counter terrorism of other countries, enhance its domestic counter terrorism infrastructure by infusing resources, upgrading its capabilities and making use of new technological tools. Stressing the need to make the JWG's and regional bodies more effective and outcome oriented, the Committee have recommended that a comprehensive assessment of their working may be carried out and an action plan be prepared accordingly. The Committee have also urged the Government to strengthen its coordination with the INTERPOL and utilize its database relating to terrorist and terror offences to pre-empt and respond to terrorist strikes/attacks in the country swiftly and decisively.

(Recommendation No. 24)

15. **Government urged to maintain close inter-Ministry and inter-agency cooperation, strengthen and upgrade its institutional mechanisms on a continuous basis.**

2.62 The Committee have noted that both legislative frameworks and institutional mechanisms exist under various Ministries like Home Affairs, Finance, Electronics and Information Technology, etc. for countering terrorism in the country. All concerned Ministries, Departments and Agencies of the Government including, *inter alia*, Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, Intelligence Bureau, Cabinet Secretariat, National Investigation Agency, National Security Guard, Bureau of Police Research and Development, Financial Intelligence Unit, Department of Revenue, National Security Council Secretariat, Central Bureau of Investigation, Bureau of Civil Aviation Security etc, are represented in the JWG-CT meetings depending on the agenda of the meetings. The Committee appreciate the ‘whole of Government approach’ in countering terrorism but are of the considered view that the challenges in coordination amongst multiple agencies in the execution of counter terrorism measures should be overcome and seamless flow of intelligence and real time sharing of inputs be ensured so that the desired impact is felt on the ground. The Committee have urged the Government to maintain close inter-Ministry and inter-agency cooperation amongst all the stakeholders involved in counter terrorism to anticipate and respond to all forms of terrorist threats and terrorist attacks in the country promptly. It should be the endeavour of the Government to strengthen and upgrade its institutional mechanisms on a continuous basis through induction of trained personnel and experts in the field of new and emerging technologies, innovative technological tools and international collaborations.

(Recommendation No. 25)

16. **Need for Government agencies to keep abreast of the latest technologies and technological tools used by global terrorist groups stressed.**

2.65 The Committee have noted that the Multi Agency Centre (MAC) platform is being used as a coordinated platform among various Ministries including MHA, MEA and MoF, etc. on the issue of counter terrorism including terror financing. MAC platform is also being used for capacity building as well as for real time coordination among Law Enforcement Agencies responsible for counter terrorism. Further, the ambit of MAC dealing with counter terrorism has been expanded to include linkages of other crimes with terrorism. Multi Agency Centre and

Subsidiary Multi Agency Centre have also been re-organized to function on 24x7 basis for real time collation and sharing of intelligence with central security agencies and law enforcement agencies of States for prompt action. The Committee have further noted that a Standing Focus Groups on Economic Intelligence has also been functional on MAC platform for coordination among stakeholders on the issue of terror financing. The Committee acknowledge the pivotal role played by the MAC as a coordinated platform on the issue of counter terrorism and have desired that it should be strengthened and fortified with adequate resources, infrastructure and infusion of teams of IT experts. The functioning of Multi Agency Centre and Subsidiary Multi Agency Centres should be made more responsive through enhancement of its capabilities, optimum use of artificial intelligence and new technological solutions. The Committee have also stressed the need for Government agencies to keep abreast of the latest technologies and technological tools used by global terrorist groups through identification of new instruments of terrorism, adopting pro-active measures to counter it effectively and sharing of real time intelligence on terrorist threats. Coordinated efforts may also be made amongst the Ministries concerned for continuous upgradation of the counter terrorism mechanism and technological tools in the country.

(Recommendation No. 28)

17. **Concerted efforts recommended to make BIMSTEC more responsive to cross border terrorism faced by India and other emerging forms of transnational crime.**

3.30 The Committee understand that BIMSTEC regional organization cooperation in counter terrorism is an area of high priority in the BIMSTEC framework and cooperation in Counter-Terrorism within the BIMSTEC framework is a work in progress and have desired that the JWG on CTTC should be strengthened to ensure deeper cooperation amongst the member countries and to activate and re-energize all the sub-groups to function as effective instruments for countering terrorism and transnational crime. Acknowledging the important role of BIMSTEC in fostering regional cooperation in counter terrorism, the Committee have recommended that concerted efforts should be made to make this organization more responsive to cross border terrorism faced by India and other emerging forms of transnational crime. Formal and informal interaction amongst intelligence agencies of India and BIMSTEC countries should also be enhanced so that inputs on terrorist threats and imminent terrorist attacks are shared on real time and responded to promptly. In addition to security dialogues, the Committee have

also recommended that the Government should take initiatives for organizing more capacity building programmes on CTTC for security personnel and law enforcement officers under the BIMSTEC framework.

(Recommendation No. 29)

18. **India to persistently advocate the need for actively supporting the efforts of the UN and its bodies.**

4.74 The Committee have noted that India is party to all the 13 UN Sectoral conventions relating to terrorism and has supported UNSC Resolution 1269 and 1368 which clearly identify terrorism as a threat to international peace and security. Further India has fully implemented resolutions 1267, 1333 and 1363 relating to terrorism by Taliban regime in Afghanistan. India has also taken several initiatives for strengthening the UN Counter Terrorism architecture led by United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism (UNOCT) and regularly contributed towards various UNOCT programmes and the UN Trust Fund for Counter Terrorism. The Committee have further noted that India has also successfully hosted the Special Meeting of the UN Security Council's Counter Terrorism Committee (UNCTC) in Mumbai and Delhi on 28-29 October 2022. Besides, the Terror related domestic laws have been amended in order to ensure action against UN designated individuals and entities. The Committee acknowledge the Government's commitment to countering terrorism and have desired that it should continue to prioritize the fight against global terrorism by fortifying its institutional, legislative and policy framework domestically and at the same time, strongly advocating the need for UN member States to do so. The Committee have also desired that India should persistently advocate the need for actively supporting the efforts of the UN and its bodies including its global capacity building programmes, regular and substantial contribution to the UN Trust Fund for Counter Terrorism, effective implementation of all the resolutions of the UN General Assembly and Security Council in letter and spirit etc. by member States. The Committee have further urged the Government to play a pro-active role in strengthening the collective international efforts to prevent and counter terrorism through the United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism.

(Recommendation No. 36)

19. **Government urged to make persistent efforts at the UNSC on the need for de-politicization of the sanctions regime, evidence-based listing and de-listing with greater transparency by the Sanctions Committee.**

4.78 The Committee have noted that the three main subsidiary bodies established by the UN Security Council that deal with terrorism related issues are the 1267/1989 Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, the Counter Terrorism Committee or 1373 Committee and the 1540 Committee dealing with preventing non-State actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. The Committee understand that effective implementation of the UN Security Council's Sanctions regime can be an effective tool in countering the activities of terrorists and terrorist groups by restricting their travel and suppressing their funding avenues and have urged the Government to support the UN efforts wholeheartedly and collaborate actively with member States in this regard. On the need for de-politicization of the sanctions regime, evidence-based listing and de-listing with greater transparency by the Sanctions Committee, the Committee have urged the Government to make persistent efforts at the UNSC to achieve the same.

(Recommendation No. 40)

20. **Periodic review of the implementation of the Delhi Declaration urged.**

4.79 The Committee have noted that at a Special Meeting of the UNSC's Counter Terrorism Committee hosted by India in Mumbai and Delhi on 28 and 29 October 2022, a strong Delhi Declaration on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes was adopted. The Declaration focused on the threat from unmanned aerial systems including drones, online radicalization and recruitment as well as terrorist financing through crypto currencies and other virtual means. The Committee stress the need for effective implementation of the Delhi Declaration by member States in the global fight against terrorism and have urged the Government to take up the issue of conducting periodic review of its implementation in the Counter Terrorism Committee of the UNSC.

(Recommendation No. 41)

21. **Need for implementation of the complete regulations of FATF on virtual assets and evolving an effective actionable implementation framework.**

4.81 The Committee have noted that the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 with the objective of setting standards and promoting effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system. It has 40 members - 38 countries and 2 regional bodies (i.e. the European Commission and the Gulf Cooperation Council). The Committee have further noted that the FATF

has expanded its work to include Proliferation Financing and Virtual Assets in its Agenda. The Committee are aware of the new mode of terror financing adopted by terrorists/terrorist groups including virtual assets and stress the need for monitoring this new terror financing mode closely. The Committee have desired that the Government should work in close coordination with the FATF and implement all the standards set by the body to curb the use of virtual assets by the terrorist groups and constantly monitor the progress in this regard. The need for implementation of the complete regulations on virtual assets by all the countries, particularly our neighbours must be voiced at various regional and multilateral fora. The Committee have also desired that the Government should evolve an effective actionable implementation framework and constantly review the working of the regulatory framework on virtual assets as well as the actionable implementation framework to meet any challenges emanating from use of new technology for terrorist financing in the country.

(Recommendation No. 43)

22. Real time sharing of intelligence updates between India and FATF recommended.

4.82 The Committee have noted that India has actively participated in FATF as well as in FATF Style Regional Bodies (FSRB). It participates in periodic sharing of intelligence updates on financing of Al Qaeda, ISIL, and their affiliates. India also actively participated in development of a guidance by FATF titled ‘Terrorist Financing Risk Assessment Guidance’ in 2019, formulation of revised guidance on Beneficial Ownership as part of FATF work project and other live projects of FATF. India as a FATF member works together with other members in the form of a task force towards the common objectives of the FATF Ministerial Mandate to tackle money laundering, terrorist and proliferation financing. The Committee are of the view that focus should be given to pre-empt and prevent terrorist financing through new technology and virtual assets through optimum use of Artificial Intelligence and sharing of real time inputs. The Committee, have therefore, recommended that India and the FATF should work towards up-gradation of periodic sharing of intelligence updates on financing of Al Qaeda, ISIL, and their affiliates to real time sharing of intelligence updates to achieve the said goal. The Committee have also desired that the Government should play a more pro-active role in FATF and improve its coordination with members of the task force to achieve the common objectives of tackling money laundering, terrorist and proliferation financing.

(Recommendation No. 44)

