



Statement of

**His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation  
United Arab Emirates

before

**the General Debate of the 71<sup>th</sup> Session**  
**of the United Nations General Assembly**

New York, 24 September, 2016

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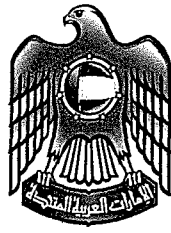
**Mr. Peter Thomson, President of the General Assembly,**

**Ministers and heads of delegations,**

At the outset, I am pleased to congratulate Your Excellency on assuming the presidency of this session of the General Assembly, and would like to affirm the United Arab Emirates' support for your efforts during your term. I would also like to express my thanks and appreciation to your predecessor Mr. Mogens Lykketoft for his wise leadership of the last session.

**Mr. President,**

In our region and beyond, several countries are facing multiple crises and conflicts that ignited after 2011. We have witnessed a number of Arab countries including Yemen, Libya, Iraq, Syria and Somalia that have descended into internal fighting. At the same time, the Palestinian people's plight continues under the Israeli occupation without a just solution on the horizon that returns to the Palestinian people the rights, that were stripped of them, to establish their state on June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Furthermore, regional interference in Arab affairs, mainly perpetrated by Iran, the only country in the world with a constitution that explicitly calls for exporting its revolution, has aggravated conflicts in the region.



The past few years have shown that solutions based on crisis management are ineffective. Therefore, joint international efforts must focus on finding fundamental solutions for these conflicts.

We are all aware of the incidents of violence and terrorism, which have taken unprecedented forms and used heinous methods, causing fear and terror not only in the Middle East but in many countries of the world, and which proved that violence and terrorism are no longer associated with a certain state or a region, but are global threats, with no borders.

The serious challenges facing our region and many other countries, require us to reflect together on ways to address these crises and reach consensual, timely and effective solutions, without undermining the existing significant efforts made in this regard. Countering terrorist groups is a right and duty of all states. However, resorting to blindly placed laws that ignore the effective role played by a number of states in countering terrorism after the suffering of others, such as the US Congress JASTA, will lead to further arbitrary policies and destabilize the existing strong relationships between allies.

**Mr. President,**

In this regard I will attempt to determine a number of thoughts to diagnose the crises and point to potential solutions to them.

The reality is that prominent powers in these crises, whether regional or international sides, have settled for managing the crises that have struck our region without overcoming them. As a result, the dangers have been exacerbated and complexified, rendering these crises difficult to solve without doubled efforts and tremendous financial and human cost.



The plight and suffering of the Palestinian people is nearing its seventh decade and has contributed to the increased waves of violence and counter violence due to the subpar management of crises without seeking serious solutions by major actors and prominent powers, including those responsible for this tragedy.

Similarly, Iraq has been suffering for more than a decade from sectarian acts and violence on an almost daily basis, in addition to the control of terrorist groups over a part of its territory, spreading fear and terror in the hearts of the Iraqi people and risking its regional integrity. Moreover, the interference of Iran in its internal affairs has exacerbated the factors of division among its people. Yet, there is no comprehensive political solution that promotes consensus among the components of the Iraqi people, and puts an end to the marginalization of whole sections of Iraqi society.

What have the effective powers done in this regard?

What have the prominent powers capable of addressing these serious crises done?

They have simply tried to minimize the severe impacts of these crises without resolving them. The natural result of this approach has been to increase the complexities that are coupled with such crises due to issues including the threat to the state, collapse of and conflict among its institutions, the emergence of terrorism and extremism, and the high price paid by the loss of the lives of the region's children and their futures. We find Iran, with its expansionist regional policies, flagrant violations of the principles of sovereignty, and constant interference in the internal affairs of its neighboring countries, has played the greatest role in causing tension and instability in the region.

Despite the so called nuclear agreement reached between Tehran and the P5 +1, and its welcoming by regional countries, hopes that the deal would change Iran's hostile approach have been quickly thwarted. Against all optimistic expectations, Iran wasted no time in continuing its efforts to undermine the security of the region, through aggressive rhetoric, blatant interference, producing and arming militias, developing its ballistic missile program, in addition to its alarming designation as a state sponsor of terrorism. And despite all that has been mentioned, Tehran has refused to



give up its policies. Its persistent behavior affirms our view that the key to stability in the region lies in confronting the crises and solving them, rather than settling for attempts to manage them.

An additional example of the inclination to avoid solving issues fundamentally and settling for condemnation alone, can be seen by the response to the decision of North Korea to develop its nuclear and ballistic capacities and carry out regular tests, which threaten the security of its neighbors, as well as international peace and security and are clearly contrary to the most fundamental rules of international law.

The same can be said of the crises in Libya, Syria, Yemen and Somalia. The lack of cognizance of these crises and timely response to prevent their exacerbation have led to the suffering of many. This is evident in the current developments in the Arab region, where the repercussions of these crises have gone beyond its borders.

The ensuing refugee crisis, the mass exodus from conflict areas and the consequent pressures on many countries have revealed the need to work together within and beyond our region, in order to develop solutions that rise above individual interests, and are not invested politically in favour of one side against another. This provides another example that ignoring crises, or settling for managing them makes the situation more complex and compartmentalized.

**Mr. President,**

Despite the gravity of the crises we all face, solutions to them would not be difficult if the international community and influential sides demonstrated goodwill and the political determination to resolve them. In this regard I would like to refer to the following set of thoughts:

First, in addition to developing solutions based on justice and respect for law, no role should be given to any extremist, terrorist or evil groups no matter what, or to those who incite sectarianism and strive to tear the very fabric of our societies apart, and this stands true of the acts of Iran in the region. Regional and international sides should also refrain from playing a negative role in these crises. If the crises continue, nobody will be safe.

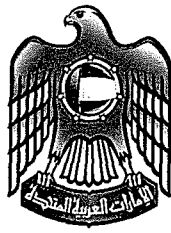


Second, there have been serious efforts to attempt to resolve some of the imminent crises in a number of countries in the region, particularly in Yemen and Libya. In Yemen, there have been a number of initiatives, including an effective roadmap, presented by the legitimate government of Yemen in Kuwait, and at the quartet meeting held in Jeddah this past August, that could have saved the Yemeni people from their suffering. We hope that these efforts result in a political solution if the intentions of these militias are sincere and if they live up to the standards of national interest and its responsibilities.

The UAE also welcomes the Skhirat Agreement reached by the concerned parties in Libya as well as the formation of the Government of National Accord. We hope that it will lead to further commitment to Libyan constitution-building, and solidifies cooperation between the Presidential Council and the House of Representatives, which both represent legitimacy in Libya. We also look forward to a unified national position that protects Libya's territorial soil and maintains the unity of its people.

The UAE sees no possibility of resolving the Syrian crisis through military force. To date, this path has only intensified the suffering of the brotherly people of Syria and increased the flow of refugees to other countries. The situation is further complicated by the interference of Iran and its terrorist militias in Syria's affairs. This has distorted the vision for Syria and derailed it from the existing path; which is based on internationally agreed terms, which constitute the only salvation from this horrific tragedy.

Our hearts bleed when we see the brotherly people of Syria are fleeing from death to death. We are deeply saddened that the Syrian people, who are known for their dignity and ancient civilization, are forced by the ongoing fighting in their country to fall into an unknown fate. A fate that starts with forced displacement and with no end in sight, in addition to the humiliation they experience as they are turned away from borders. The repercussions of this crisis – and the impact of violence, displacement and an uncertain future – will affect generations of Syrians.



The above examples affirm the view of the region that settling for managing the crises, bandaging the wounds, repeating charitable humanitarian efforts or holding recurring international conferences are no substitutes for solving these crises.

Despite the complexity of the crises overtaking our region, some of which I have referred to, there are still hopes for overcoming them. This is evident in the solutions adopted by the UAE and the brotherly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the region, which provide optimism and we hope they will positively impact other countries of the region.

**Mr. President,**

The UAE affirms its deep belief in the values of justice, international law, human rights, the pillars of good governance as well as the importance of providing an enhanced environment of happiness to its citizens and residents. This belief is paired with practical policies which are built on the conviction that true development does not only involve economic development, but also puts investment in people at the forefront based on the principles of tolerance, acceptance of the other, and equality among all, without discrimination between men and women. The empowerment of women has become a central policy in our country because of our belief in their pioneering societal role, their active contributions to generation-building, and their success in doing so.

My country places the sound building of the human as a means and an end: a policy and a legislation. We believe that the essential framework to achieve this goal should be based on protecting the state, including its protection from the factors of extremism and sectarianism, defending its national institutions and ensuring their stability. All these requirements are necessary to solidify the state's fortitude against factors of disintegration and collapse, which have threatened other countries in the region.

In this regard, my country has built mechanisms and means to protect our youth from falling into the clutches of extremism and violence. We have established the Hedayah Center to combat extremism, and participated with the United States of America in creating the "Sawab Center". Additionally, the Muslim Council of Elders and the Forum for the Promotion of Peace in Muslim Communities were established to demonstrate the true face of Islam. These institutions aim to



protect young people who have been polarized by extremist, sectarian and terrorist groups, and to counter the false claims of these groups.

**Mr. President,**

The crises of our region should not distract us from our core national issue which is the sovereignty of the UAE over its three islands: Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, which are occupied by Iran against the provisions of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. My country has called, and continues to call on, our neighbor Iran, to return the occupied islands to their rightful owners either voluntarily or through peaceful means, particularly through international justice or arbitration, in order to maintain friendly relations and good neighborliness in the Arabian Gulf region. We also affirm that my country will never give up its sovereign right over these islands, and this approach emphasizes the UAE's insistence on the principles of international law.

**Mr. President,**

Our faith in the role of the United Nations and its organs, especially the UN Security Council, in maintaining international peace and security is unwavering. We expect the United Nations to play an effective and vital role in addressing and resolving conflicts and strengthening states' fortitude through a framework that ensures respect for the national sovereignty of states and non-interference in their internal affairs. Our region, which suffers from serious crises and conflicts, urgently needs a more effective method to confront these crises and disputes based on deep rooted solutions backed by the international community.

To enable the Security Council to carry out its role, the members of the Council need to work together for the benefit and wellbeing of our region and all countries in the world. To ensure the United Nations is effective in a multipolar world, a greater role must be given to the General Assembly and more attention must be directed towards early planning to achieve security and stability. This can be done through constructive strategies and programs that aim at achieving sustainable development, eradicating poverty in all its forms, fighting inequality, addressing



climate change, and defending human rights. We are firmly convinced that the effectiveness of the United Nations and its principal organs can be achieved through institutional cooperation with regional organizations under clear mechanisms that enhance such cooperation, and make it a cornerstone of the United Nations' work.

The UAE looks forward to working with the next Secretary-General with a view to promoting the work and effectiveness of the United Nations' organs and programs, in order to ensure progress and results in terms of finding solutions for resolving and preventing conflicts, as well as predicting and building the necessary capacities required to maintain international peace and security.

Thank you Mr. President