

INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

The United Nations General Assembly formed an Ad Hoc Committee on Terrorism after the Munich massacre of Israeli athletes in 1972. This Committee ended its work in 1979 after the General Assembly failed to agree on common measures to combat terrorism. In 1985, the General Assembly unanimously adopted Resolution 40/61, through which, for the first time, it unequivocally condemned terrorism. Since then, the Syrian Government has proposed the convening of an international conference to define terrorism and to lay down the demarcation line separating it from the "struggle of peoples for their just cause and the liberation of their territories" (UN Document A/42/58 of 18 December 1986). This proposal has been endorsed by the Arab League and the Islamic Conference. The East European Group has also presented a proposal (Document A/42/416 of 24 July 1987) that calls, inter alia, for a revival of the Ad Hoc Committee on Terrorism.

Canada regards the adoption of Resolution 40/61 as a major accomplishment. The Canadian objective at UNGA 42 is to ensure that the General Assembly does not step back from the unequivocal condemnation of terrorism expressed in that resolution. Instead of convening an international conference or reviving the Ad Hoc Committee, Canada favours the functional approach that has been followed in the various counter-terrorist conventions adopted under UN auspices. This approach involves identifying a particular form of terrorist act (e.g. highjacking, hostage taking, terrorist attacks at airports) and subjecting it to suppression and punishment according to the "extradite or prosecute" principle. Canada continues to believe that the key to combatting international terrorism is cooperation among states in all aspects of the counter-terrorist effort, including appropriate action against governments which support or sponsor terrorism.