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INTERVIEW

# Terrorism is a common challenge for humanity: Ban Ki-moon



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UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon during an interview in New Delhi on Tuesday. Photo: S. Subramaniam

**This is the Secretary General on January**

Hello and welcome to this special interview as UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, who is visiting India, speaks to *CNN-IBN* and *The Hindu*. I am Suhasini Haidar.

**Q. Secretary General, you are here even as the world is mourning the victims of the attack in Paris. You and PM Modi (Prime Minister Narendra Modi) spoke at the Vibrant Gujarat conference about global terrorism. How do you think the world can cooperate better, or has the world failed?**

**UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon:** We are deeply concerned about the increasing trend of growing terrorism, extremism and radicalisation. To address all these we have to be united, to show that nations are united and solid in addressing all this. At the same time, we have to mobilise all possible resources and strength to deter.

Unfortunately with all the technological development and communication, these terrorists are using internet and social media to propagate their hate. This is very dangerous. The **United Nations** has adopted a resolution on global counter-terrorism and we have set up a counter-terrorism centre on training and assistance, and the Security Council has taken a leadership role in the case of ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and Levent) or Da'esh, in Iraq and Syria, the UNSC has urged the world, whoever has the capacity and resources to provide their support. If we don't address ISIL, Da'esh and Boko Haram, and all these terror groups, we will not be able to provide sustainable development, or protect human rights and human dignity. Terrorism is a common challenge for humanity.

**Q: But is there a global double standard? Because its not just ISIL or Boko Haram, or the attacks in France or Australia or Canada, but also the terrorist attacks in the subcontinent. India has sponsored an international convention of terror... is that something you would recommend?**

**UNSG:** Member states are discussing the matter of just who are the terrorists and other issues, but at this time rather than spending time and energy on definitions, these ISIL and other groups have been doing unspeakable acts of brutality against parts of humanity. It is important that government authorities take a firm position, show solidarity domestically and regionally, and in terms of their justice system, they have to ensure that all these perpetrators should be brought to justice. At the same time it is important to have good governance and inclusive dialogue with the people so terrorists and extremist elements may not find any breeding ground on the basis of people's grievances.

**Q: The problem is that in India as I said, there is a perception of a double standard. For example, a UN designated global terrorist like the Lashkar-e-Taiba founder and Jamat-ud-Dawa chief Hafiz Saeed, wanted for the Mumbai attacks, was in Lahore addressing a public rally last month. He is a globally designated terrorist, and was re-designated by the UN just a few weeks ago...how is it possible without any comment from the UN?**

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If we don't address ISIL, terror groups, we will not be able to protect human rights and prevent terror attacks that all these terrorists would be put to justice. I sincerely hope that the Indian and Pakistani government authorities discuss this matter that all the perpetrators should be punished as terrorists, brought to trial. It is important not to allow room for terrorist groups, radical groups, armed groups to take such chances with the lapse of the justice system.

**Q: But it's not just a lapse of the justice system, simply because this is a UN designated global terrorist, under UNSC resolution 1267, addressing a public rally. Is the UN mandate being flouted, not just by the terrorist himself, but by the government?**

**UNSG:** Yes, it is very important that the Pakistan government take necessary and corrective measures in accordance with the UNSC's designated terrorist counter-terrorism policies.

**Q: Because if the UN allows its mandate to be flouted in this manner, the UN loses its teeth when it comes to tackling terror... would you agree?**

**UNSG:** It is important that all these resolutions and counter-terrorism measures be fully implemented by national government and government leaders must ensure they are engaged with their people so that their aspirations and grievances are addressed before this kind of radicalisation is allowed to take place.

**Q: Will the UN then take note of this specific example of a designated global terrorist being allowed by the government to openly flout the UN resolution?**

**UNSG:** Yes I have already taken note of it.

**Q: The UN will celebrate its 70th year under you, it's a big thing. At the same time, there are concerns about the efficacy of the UN, that it is too large and can't respond to problems swiftly. Will this also be a year of stocktaking and reform?**

This is a very significant anniversary... member states have worked hard for seven decades to provide peace and security, to bring people out of poverty, and also protect human rights and dignity. We do understand that we have not fully met the expectations. We are committed to shape the post-2015 millennium agenda with a set of sustainable development goals, covering economic and the whole spectrum of human life. At the same time we should do more especially on human rights so that nobody will be left behind.

**Q: What about India's own role at the UN. India has long demanded a seat at the Security Council, along with other countries. Do you think that is a possibility, and could ever be a reality?**

**UNSG:** I am aware of the aspirations of many member states including India who really want to see the UNSC reformed in a much more democratic and representative way. I think it needs the consensus view of member states. If we consider the drastic changes that have taken place in the last 70 years, it is necessary for the Security Council to adapt. The question is, the member states should be able to find the modalities to meet the aspirations of states like India.

It's a very important issue. The general assembly has taken this up informally and I have urged them to accelerate the process, so that the Security Council can be better equipped to address all the changing peace and security issues.

**Q: Many here feel that given the contribution of India to the UN, if you look at peacekeeping alone, India has contributed to 44 (out) of the 69 UN peacekeeping missions so far, yet it has been denied the stature at the Security Council high table, that it would deserve.**

**UNSG:** India has been serving as a non-permanent member of the Security Council frequently, most recently three years ago, and India has contributed a lot. By any standard, India is a critically important member state, in terms of peace and security, **>we appreciate more than 8,000 peacekeepers working** in many dangerous and difficult circumstances and we also appreciate the strong contribution for the democracy fund. India is the second largest contributor in the world to that. We also expect India, one of the fastest growing economies, to lead our sustainable development process and our

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It is important that the In human rights of those people

climate change negotiation process.

**Q: When you speak of the expectations from India, you have made strong statements over the past few months on issues in India, for example violence against women, and here in Delhi have opposed India's law criminalising homosexuality in strong terms. Have you taken up these concerns with India's leadership?**

**UNSG:** It's a matter of human rights. Human rights is one of the fundamental principles of the UN Charter, a pillar along with peace and security, and development. But human rights is the foremost pillar. In that regard, human rights and dignity should be respected for all the people, regardless of religion or ethnicity or gender or sexual orientation. It is important that the Indian government should promote the human rights of those people with different sexual orientation. The Indian penal code **>should decriminalise homosexuality.**

As the Secretary General of the UN I have been speaking out to promote the human dignity of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgenders.

**Q: Is that something you have taken up with PM Modi and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj?**

**UNSG:** Yes, it is something we are continuously discussing.

**Q: You were at the Vibrant Gujarat delivering an unusual message – to speak about climate change at an investment conference. Are you hopeful of a world climate change agreement at the conference in Paris this year, as U.S. Secretary of State Kerry indicated?**

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Remember India is no exception to climate change phenomena **UNSG:** Yes, I would like to emphasise again that sustainable development and climate change are two sides of the same coin. If you adequately address climate change, you will help green growth, and make planet earth more sustainable.

That is why the UN has for 2015 made its two top priorities sustainable development and the adoption of a climate change agreement in December this year. All this must be done in 2015, it is the most important priority for humanity. We are targeting that by 2030 we should realise a world where nobody is left behind and with this climate change agreement we can work

towards it. Remember **>India is no exception...** you are on the frontlines of the climate change phenomena.

**Q: The resistance in India to a deal on climate change is that it's all very well for developed countries to lecture India on climate change, but India still needs energy, needs to develop. India is targeting renewable energy of 100,000MW now. How do you explain it to them?**

**UNSG:** India has a lot of challenges. First they have several hundred million in poverty. In Gujarat, I was encouraged that the way PM Modi is leading in enhancing renewable energy and 100 smart cities, these are very good policies in line with addressing climate change. I hope with these initiatives India will join the international community in moving to achieve a climate change deal.

**Q: Finally, if I may ask, this is your fourth visit to India as UNSG, but you have a deeper Indian connection... your son was born here, your daughter-in-law is Indian... is that the reason you were happy to facilitate India's long pending request for International Yoga Day?**

**UNSG:** I am looking forward to June 21st International Yoga Day, approved by the UNGA. There are two days in a year, which are designated by an Indian initiative, one is the International Day of Non-Violence on Mahatma Gandhi's birthday and the other is bringing health through Yoga, which is part of a sustainable world.

When your body is healthy, and your family is healthy, then the world will be healthy and prosperous.

**Q: Do you practice Yoga yourself?**

**UNSG:** It's one of my big regrets, even when I lived in India I did not learn Yoga, but this will be a good occasion to make up for that.

**Well we hope to see you at the forefront of that in June. Thank you for speaking with us.**



*Photos and Video by S. Subramaniam.*

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