
Supporting and Highlighting Victims of Terrorism

Website:

www.un.org/terrorism/victims.shtml

Members:

- Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) Office (lead)
- Department of Political Affairs (DPA)
- Department of Public Information (DPI)
- International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
- Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
- Special Rapporteur on the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms While Countering Terrorism
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
- United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI)

Additional Partners:

- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

Purpose:

The Working Group on Supporting and Highlighting Victims of Terrorism was established in accordance with the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy's commitment to consolidating national systems of assistance for victims of terrorism (with UN support to develop such systems), promoting international solidarity with victims of terrorism, and fostering the involvement of civil society in the global campaign to condemn terrorism.²⁶³

The initial step towards implementing this component of the Global Strategy took place in September 2008, when the Secretary-

General convened a symposium on supporting victims of terrorism, bringing together a range of stakeholders to discuss concrete ways to support and empower victims of terrorism for the first time on a global level.²⁶⁴ According to the Secretary-General's comments in the resulting report, *Supporting Victims of Terrorism*, the purpose of the symposium was to "provide a forum for discussing concrete steps to assist victims in coping with their experiences, to share best practices and to highlight measures already taken by Member States and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to support and empower victims."²⁶⁵ The report also summarizes key themes discussed at the symposium and offers a set of recommendations made by participants.

The working group has devised a series of follow-up plans to this report, including:

- developing a virtual platform or web portal that can be used as a forum for victims, experts, government officials, service providers, and civil society to share information, resources, and best practices on supporting victims of terrorism;
- developing a study/guide of best practices for providing financial support to victims of terrorism, based on existing national practices;
- collaborating with the Global Survivors Network and the Centre on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation on a series of projects to support victims, beginning with a media training program for victims of terrorism;
- compiling a study on the rights of victims of terrorism based on a 2010 expert workshop.²⁶⁶

As planned, a study on the rights of victims has been undertaken, based on the discussions from a 2010 workshop in Siracusa, Italy, co-organized by the working group and the International Institute of Higher Studies in Criminal Justice. The workshop focused on supporting victims of terrorist crimes and related offences as defined in national and international law. The working group conducted a media-training workshop with the Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation in June 2011 for victims of terrorism

to strengthen survivor's communication with media.²⁶⁷ In November 2011 the working group launched a report on "The Handbook on Criminal Justice Response to Acts of Terrorism", led by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The report is a substantive publication serving as a basis for the provision of technical assistance, upon request, for building the capacity of member states with regard to criminal justice aspects of supporting victims of terrorism.²⁶⁸

Members of the working group have also contributed to supporting victims of terrorism through their respective mandates. For instance, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) created the International Civil Aviation Compensation Fund in order to provide compensation to victims of terrorist attacks.²⁶⁹