



## UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

**Remarks by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism,**

**United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism**

**International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to Victims of Terrorism**

**21 August 2025**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

Today, we remember and honor the victims and survivors of terrorism.

We pay tribute to those whose lives were stolen by terrorism, and we stand in solidarity with those who continue to live with the pain, loss, and trauma.

This International Day is not only one of remembrance; it's a reaffirmation of our collective commitment to uphold the rights, dignity and voices of victims everywhere.

This year's theme, "United by Hope: Collective Action for Victims of Terrorism," reminds us of the power that emerges when victims and survivors come together, not only to heal, but to lead. Victims are transforming pain into purpose. Their voices are integral to shaping policy and driving change to prevent similar attacks.

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy recognizes the vital role of victims in countering the appeal of terrorism.

In April, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism proudly launched the Victims of Terrorism Associations Network, or VoTAN, a global initiative developed by and for victims and victims' associations.

VoTAN reflects a powerful truth: victims of terrorism are not the passive subject of compassion and support.

They are leaders, rights advocates, and peacebuilders.

Today, we will hear from members of the network, individuals who have suffered unimaginable loss and yet stand here as leaders of change.

With over 100 members from more than 45 countries, VoTAN is creating new spaces for collaboration.

It also reflects our shared responsibility.

We must ensure that victims are not isolated or forgotten but supported and empowered.

We must invest in comprehensive and holistic approaches to ensuring that the physical, medical, legal, and psychosocial needs of victims and their families are met.

And that the human rights of victims are protected, in particular for women and children and for victims of sexual and gender-based violence committed by terrorists.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Victims support should not be a privilege; it's a right. And international solidarity must be matched by action.

That is why UNOCT is working with partners to support victim-centered laws and policies, strengthen national assistance frameworks and take into account gender, age, disability, socio-economic circumstances, and promote victims' participation in counter-terrorism efforts.

We are grateful to Member States who step up by investing in long-term support.

I thank the Kingdom of Spain, the Republic of Iraq, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Republic of the Philippines and the Kingdom of Morocco for their contributions to support the work of the United Nations for and with victims.

Yet, sustainable funding for global and national efforts in support of victims remains urgently needed.

Dear friends,

This Day calls on us not only to remember, but to act.

Let's commit to listening more deeply. To responding more effectively. To building stronger, more inclusive systems of support. And to honor the voices of victims. Above all, let's stand with victims, not just today, but every day, as they lead us toward a future of solidarity, resilience, and peace.

To all the victims and survivors of terrorism: Thank you for your courage, your leadership and for reminding us that even in the darkest moments, hope unites us.

The United Nations stands with you. Thank you.