



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF
Remembrance of and Tribute
to the Victims of Terrorism

SURVIVING TERRORISM

THE POWER OF CONNECTIONS

**Opening remarks from H.E. Mr. Agustín Santos Maraver
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Spain to the UN and co-Chair of the
Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism**

20 August 2021

Secretary General, Antonio Guterres

Under Secretary General, Vladimir Voronkov

Distinguished delegates, participants and representatives of Victims Associations,

Ladies and gentlemen

It is a great honour to participate in the International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism. This is the Fourth time that we hold this commemoration, which is the most visible outcome of the Resolution at this regard presented by our Afghan friends in 2017.

It is specially relevant -looking at what is happening in Afghanistan in the last days-, to maintain and even increase the demand of the international community to respect and enhance the role played by the Victims of Terrorism and, in a broader way, the critical importance of the respect of Human Rights in any circumstance, by any actor.

These four years have shown the consolidation of the Victims of Terrorism as one of the most important features in our Counter Terrorism effort.

There are many reasons that underline the importance of the Victims of Terrorism, but let me focus on two of them:

- On one hand, it is one of the most relevant examples of the importance of the protection of human rights while combating terrorism. We have to continue our efforts to provide the victims with all the support they need, both restoring the material conditions for the exercise of their rights as citizens in their

terrible circumstances, and also giving them the visibility and recognition they deserve.

- But there is also a very important side in the role that victims can and should play in the fight against terrorism, countering the narratives of the terrorist groups. The number of examples where we can see the role that victims play at this regard grows every year. And in the last days we have had new examples that show very clearly that the testimony of the victims is a major instrument in the fight against terrorism.

In this last year since the third Remembrance Day, the Seventh Review of the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy was negotiated. The Seventh Review managed to include, in its outcome, important new elements regarding the Victims of Terrorism; included new stronger references to the assistance and support to the Victims, as well as references to the importance of the role played by civil society organizations at this regard.

From a broader perspective, the Seventh Review managed to strengthen and deepen the language on Human Rights, adopted finally by consensus. We should not forget that the Global Counter Terrorism Review, being the cornerstone of the UN efforts in this field, belongs to all of us, and therefore we should recognize the clear desire of the vast majority of member states to reinforce this key aspect.

Furthermore, the presence, from the very creation of the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy of two of its four pillars specifically dedicated to the Prevention of Terrorism and to Human Rights, and the request made in several reviews to increase the balance between the pillars, makes it even more necessary to apply its main conclusions.

Precisely, some of the events that have taken place lately show the need to increase the efforts on the long term Prevention approach, showing the limits of the strategies founded solely in security measures.

Referring to last year events, I would also like to mention the recent inauguration, in Spain, of the Centro Memorial de las Víctimas del Terrorismo (Victims of Terrorism Memorial Centre). The main objective of this Memorial is precisely to maintain the Memory of the victims, and to give visibility to their tragic experiences. We look forward putting in contact the Memorial with UNOCT in order to possible collaborations.

Looking at the next year, we really hope that the Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism will finally take place as soon as the pandemic situation allow us. We think it is going to be a key reference in the consolidation of this subject in the international agenda, and both the Group of Friends and Spain, look forward to collaborating with the United Nations Counter Terrorism Office in its organization.

Also next year, we intend to host the Regional Conference on Human Rights and Civil Society Organizations in the Spanish city of Málaga, that had to be postponed last year due to the pandemic. This Conference will include a part specifically dedicated to the Victims of Terrorism.

Ladies and Gentlemen

In some weeks we will commemorate the 20th anniversary of one of the most dreadful terrorist attacks in history, that took place in New York, on the 11th of September of 2001. Keeping in mind all the victims of that terrible day, and all the victims of the terrorist attacks that have happened throughout the world, I would like to invite all of you to observe a minute of silence to honor all the victims of terrorism.