



# UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

**Statement by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General  
United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism**

**High-level Event for the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims  
of Terrorism  
21 August 2023**

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
dear friends,

Today we commemorate the sixth International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism. Terrorism continues to threaten peace and security leaving, in its wake, hundreds of thousands of victims and survivors. Defeating this scourge to prevent future victims is crucial. But we must also ensure that those whose worlds have been changed forever receive the support they need to rebuild their lives and realize their rights. The international community has made important progress in recent years.

Last September, the first United Nations Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism marked a new milestone. Together, we have charted a progressive and forward-looking international agenda in support of victims of terrorism. This year we are maintaining a strong focus on victims and survivors of terrorism.

Member States have re-committed to strong language on victims with the eighth, consensus review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. They are now preparing to review the resolution of the General Assembly on enhancement of international cooperation to assist victims of terrorism. We also continue to strengthen the capacity of Member States to support victims and survivors of terrorism. The United Nations Office on Counter-Terrorism and Office on Drugs and Crime work closely together in this regard.

Finally, I am very proud that, in June, we dedicated a beautiful, young Zelkova tree in the gardens of the United Nations Headquarters,

A tree as a permanent symbol of solidarity and tribute to the victims and survivors of terrorism across the globe.

Dear Victims and Survivors,  
This Day is about you.

It reminds us that no matter how long ago an attack occurred you continue to live and cope with its aftermath for the rest of your lives. This Day provides a moment of humility and reflection during which the world stands alongside you.

I have met many victims from around the world. Their scars may fade over time but their pain, is lifelong. And across every continent, they share an overwhelming commonality: They feel deeply that no-one should have to go through, what they went through. That is why, this year's theme for our International Day is *legacy* -- finding hope and building together a peaceful future free from terrorism.

This theme was chosen following consultations with our victims of terrorism associations network over the past year. We want to highlight the very human and common desire of victims to make sense, of what happened and to find purpose, to change things for the better. And so, on this International Day, I am proud to announce that the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism is launching "The Legacy Project." A new documentary gallery through social media to showcase how victims and survivors are creating a positive legacy in the aftermath of terrorism. What shines through this project is the hope and resilience of victims and survivors, their courage and strength, and how, by remembering the past, they are imprinting their legacy in our collective memory.

I would like to thank the victims who shared their testimonies with us today. And I encourage you all to visit the project gallery and help amplify the legacy of victims and survivors of terrorism.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Two days ago, marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Canal Hotel bomb attack in Baghdad, Iraq, on 19 August 2003. On that tragic day which we now remember as the World Humanitarian Day we lost 22 people. Many of them staff members of the United Nations working to build peace, security, and prosperity for humankind, including Sergio Vieira de Mello, the Special Representative to Iraq.

Terrorism has no respect for nationality, faith, gender, age, or location. We must all, in our shared bond as human beings, stand up against it, and work together, with the victims, to build a better future.

The United Nations stands with you.

Thank you.