



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

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

Launch of the Victims of Terrorism Associations Network (VoTAN)

**28 April 2025, 10:00-12:00 (EST)
Conference Room 6
United Nations Headquarters**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great honor to welcome you to the launch of the Victims of Terrorism Associations Network.

I am pleased to open this event alongside His Excellency Jose Manuel Albares Bueno, Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Spain, His Excellency Mr. Héctor José Gómez Hernández, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Spain to the United Nations and His Excellency Abbas Kadhom Obaid Al-Fatlawi, Chargé d’Affaires at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Iraq, who are joining us today in their capacity as co-chairs of the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism.

And I want to extend a warm welcome to the victims and survivors of terrorism represented at this event.

The powerful video we have just seen reminds us of the immense courage and resilience shown by victims and survivors of terrorism. In the face of unimaginable personal tragedy, many have chosen not only to heal, but to raise their voices, becoming powerful advocates for solidarity and tolerance.

The Victims of Terrorism Associations Network seeks to build on that strength. This unique initiative will bring together victims of terrorism and victims’ associations from across the globe under one umbrella.

Through its new digital platform, global membership, and working groups, the Victims of Terrorism Associations Network will engage, collaborate, and share good practices, research, and resources to deepen a community of practice on victims’ rights.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Despite significant efforts by Member States, terrorism remains a serious threat to international peace and security, and a daily reality for thousands of people around the world.

Women, children, and young people continue to be among the most vulnerable victims of these attacks.

Given the global nature of the threat, no country, no citizen, is immune.

Terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism represent an affront to human rights and the fundamental freedoms of all peoples.

Today, we are focusing on the people most impacted by terrorism – victims.

Every victim's life is altered after a terrorist attack. In many cases, the needs of victims and survivors are urgent and underfunded. Their rights, enshrined in international law, are not always recognized and respected. International and national assistance remains critical.

Victims of terrorism continue to need more support than is readily available. Sadly, this is true in both developed and developing countries. We can all do better.

This is why the Global Victims of Terrorism Programme is hosted in the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism.

I have had the honour of speaking with a number of victims and survivors of terrorism over the years. Many go on to use their experiences to build peace, to drive change, and to assist each other.

To all victims of terrorism and victims' associations gathered here today, I want to thank you and recognize the immense effort that you are making to build a better world. It is an act of extreme generosity for you to share your testimony and expertise.

I want each of you to know that we are listening. And to our speakers today: Hasan, Grace, Ariel, Marisol, Joseph, thank you.

The Victims of Terrorism Associations Network is an initiative that is very dear to me. It was a key recommendation from the Global Congress on Victims of Terrorism held in 2022. The Network is a new model for civil society engagement for my Office.

It reinforces our commitment to victim-centric and victim-led approaches to preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism.

Last year, the Kingdom of Spain contributed the funding necessary for the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism to develop and launch the Victims of Terrorism Associations Network, for which I am deeply grateful.

Spain's steadfast commitment to victims of terrorism is remarkable. We have achieved great results together, including the International Conference on Victims of Terrorism held in

Vitoria in October 2024 and this launch of the Victims of Terrorism Associations Network. I hope our efforts will encourage other Member States, including from the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism, to come forward and help us to sustain this important work.

I would also like to thank the Republic of Iraq for the pledged financial contribution in 2025 and commitment to making the next International Conference a reality.

Allow me to also acknowledge the Republic of the Philippines, which was a beneficiary of the Model Legislative Provisions to Support and Protect the Rights and Needs of Victims of Terrorism, and has since become a contributor to our work, signalling their intent to improve the situation of victims of terrorism.

We are especially grateful to our long-standing partner, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its support. This enduring partnership has been vital to the success of our work.

Securing adequate financial support for our work on victims of terrorism is a critical challenge. I call on other Member States to provide urgent support to ensure that the Victims of Terrorism Associations Network and the Global Programme remain sustainable, impactful, and responsive to the needs of victims of terrorism worldwide.

Dear colleagues,

In adopting the Pact for the Future, world leaders committed to pursuing a future free from terrorism. It is now time for Member States to act and turn that commitment into reality.

The next review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy which will take place next year, offers a timely opportunity to further strengthen our collective efforts to work with and support victims of terrorism.

Let us work together to that end. With the Victims of Terrorism Associations Network, we will stand united in our commitment to supporting the rights and needs of victims of terrorism.

I look forward to working with all of you.

Thank you.