



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM**

Keynote Address

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Tuesday's Children

Lessons in Recovery and Resilience Forum

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Good morning.

I would like to thank Tuesday's Children for inviting me to address this fourth forum on Lessons in Recovery and Resilience and for ensuring the voices and experiences of victims are at the centre of the discussions today. As a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces and a former diplomat who spent decades bringing perpetrators of mass violence to justice, assuring dignity for victims, and supporting survivors, this subject is deeply personal. So I would like to also thank Tuesday's Children for the help it has given to both military service members as well as to communities grappling with trauma.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Tuesday, September 11, 2001 changed the lives of thousands of people. Those who were just starting their workday, or were flying to another city, had their lives extinguished in an instant. Thousands were injured; thousands more sickened.

Families, survivors, responders, recovery workers, government officials, -- even people who watched in shock and dismay as the events unfolded live on TV -- everyone was impacted by these attacks. The pain and grief are immeasurable, and for many of us attending the forum today, personal, and maybe, never-ending. I would like to pay tribute to all who were affected on that day and beyond.

9/11 also opened a new chapter in the global fight against terrorism. On 9/12, NATO Allies invoked Article 5 of the Washington Treaty for the first time in its history, providing unwavering support to this country's efforts to hold the perpetrators accountable for killing nearly 3,000 people from over 90 countries in the span of just a few minutes. Sixteen days later the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1373 under

Chapter VII of the UN Charter, obliging all UN Member States to criminalize the financing of terrorism and to deny safe haven to terrorists.

Since then, when it comes to terrorism, the Member States of the United Nations have remained just that: united. The Security Council has gone on to unanimously adopt numerous counterterrorism resolutions, including ones addressing incitement to terrorism, the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon, and sanctions against terrorist groups and individuals.

In 2006 the General Assembly adopted by consensus of all its members the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which has served ever since as the guiding framework for Member States, regional organizations and UN counter-terrorism efforts. Today, as we are gathered in this forum, Member States are negotiating a new General Assembly resolution that will define the world's priorities for the next two years.

The effect of COVID-19 on the terrorism landscape is not just a subject of the draft resolution, it is also part of how it is negotiated, given that health precautions make it exceedingly difficult to hold the sorts of intense, person-to-person discussions that yield compromise and progress. Many victims of terrorism and mass violence have experienced such perturbation even more acutely, as for many the pandemic has denied them the healing benefits of social connectedness and peer support, attending in-person memorial events, exacerbated the effects of their earlier trauma, or resulted in loss of yet another love one.

I am sorry to say that as the world reels from the COVID-19 crisis, terrorism continues to evolve, continuing to pose a grave threat to international peace and security, its trends magnified during the pandemic, and many of its underlying drivers exacerbated by the political and socio-economic fallout from the crisis.

Terrorist groups have been quick to exploit opportunities created by governments focused on responding to the pandemic and populations made fearful, isolated, or disconnected by the hardships associated with lockdowns. Taking advantage of people spending more time online, we have seen an increase in hate and conspiracy theories and a growing, transnational threat stemming from neo-Nazism, white supremacy and other racially and ethnically motivated movements. While in Africa increasing attacks are carried out by groups affiliated with ISIL and Al-Qaeda, in the West spasmodic attacks are often carried out by individuals inspired by or only loosely affiliated with these groups or radicalized to violence online by networks of like-minded hatemongers.

But the results are the same – innocent civilians murdered, tortured, wounded, displaced, upended – with the effects rippling outward.

No one country can defeat transnational terrorism on its own. That is why the Secretary-General has pushed an ambitious agenda to this effect ensuring that the United Nations plays a crucial role in bringing Member States, regional organizations and civil society together to facilitate dialogue, cooperation and partnerships at all levels with victims at the centre.

Our efforts are focused on ensuring that the ongoing review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy that I mentioned a moment ago reflects the concerns and needs of victims, including by upholding the rights and addressing the needs of victims of terrorism, which are so central to accountability, healing and prevention.

The international community has also been guided by two key milestone General Assembly resolutions on victims that chart the way forward. These two resolutions – to establish an International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism and to strengthen international collaboration enable collective concrete action. More importantly, the resolutions call for victim-centric approaches and the establishment of national comprehensive assistance plans for victims can victims ensure holistic and comprehensive support is provided from day one and into the longer term.

For the Secretary-General and the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism, victims are the reason why we do what we do, and why we strive to do more to help those who live with the consequences of what has happened and to prevent new victims from being created. The trauma from these ordeals do not simply disappear. They scar individuals, families and communities. Data shows that they can reverberate from generation to generation not just in terms of transmitted memory, but even in terms of an epigenetic component to the intergenerational transmission of trauma. Like a subatomic particle that is obscured from view, we know this happens because we can measure the effect it has on things around it. But we also know that there are things that can be done to stop that conveyor belt of pain, including through the kind of work that Tuesday's Children does at home and abroad to help victims.

Yet we should not view victims as just a group of helpless, traumatised individuals. Far from it. Many have overcome unimaginable pain and suffering and used this courage and ability to create positive change out of adversity. They have demonstrated not only the resilience to recover, but to provide a positive impact in their communities, giving back to society as part of their long-term healing process. Their commitment to improve the recognition of and support for other victims and survivors—especially those who are struggling to cope and need help—is deeply inspiring. We will hear some of those courageous stories today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

That same courage is what inspires our efforts at the international level to support victims of terrorism.

In response to the Secretary-General's call to do more to support victims of terrorism, my Office recently launched a newly expanded Victims of Terrorism Support Programme to promote and protect the rights and needs of victims of terrorism. It not only stands in solidarity with victims, but develops practical and effective tools to support victims, Member States and civil society. It provides a platform to let victims speak to their own experiences and needs. It provides a resource mechanism, through the UN Victims of Terrorism Support Portal, to house relevant documents and support available across the world. And it provides capacity building to Member States and strategic communications training for victims. Together, these activities form the basis from which to further develop and implement our efforts to create a stronger enabling environment to push for the promotion and protection of the rights of victims. Stronger and more resilient victims equal a stronger and more resilient world.

This year is pivotal in the fight against terrorism. It is a year that is both reflective looking - commemorating landmark anniversaries like 9/11, UNSCR 1373 and the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the Global Strategy, and outward looking – through the General Assembly's review but also the UN's first Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism.

This August's International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism offers the opportunity for us all to engage on these activities and not only honour those who died, but hear victims, advocate on their behalf and increase awareness at both the international and national level on how much more we can - and must do for victims.

It is our hope that the forthcoming UN Global Congress on Victims of Terrorism, towards the end of the year, will bring victims of terrorism, victims' associations and civil society together in a forum that allows Member State governments to understand victims' needs, share good practices, and recognize the universality of victims' experiences and vocabulary regardless of what language they speak or which country they come from.

However, we know that nothing can truly change without a change in legislation. A new regulatory landscape on victims of terrorism must be developed that is victim centric. My Office, in partnership with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and the Inter-Parliamentary Union is developing model legislative provisions that support and protect the rights and needs of victims of terrorism. When finalized later this year, these model provisions will give Member States practical recommendations on how to incorporate practical support into legislation that benefits victims of terrorism.

Legislation is not enough, of course. We have established a multidisciplinary, functional approach that includes networking, peer to peer engagement and support, and development of practical tools and trainings. We understand the importance of connection, of bringing people together, of supporting and learning from each other and sharing experiences. It has been a privilege to witness friendships created, projects and partnerships developed, and peer support perpetuated in the aftermath of our workshops: creating a ripple effect of positive change across the globe.

We will continue to work in collaboration with civil society organisations to support victims. We recognise the strength of victims and how they can contribute to a more cohesive and resilient society, and we will continue to call upon Member States to uphold their obligations towards victims.

That is why this Forum is important - to create a space to discuss these issues and we are pleased to partner with Tuesday's Children in these efforts. Tuesday's Children has contributed greatly to the development of good practices for victims of terrorism, and we learn valuable lessons from these shared experiences with other trauma communities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Twenty years ago, terrorists upended the world as we knew it. They inflicted pain, suffering, and scars. Yet, out of this we see an enormous force of positive change, solidarity, resilience.

We cannot let the terrorists determine the course of a life even after the attack. Let us instead remember and honour those who have been killed in acts of terrorism by helping survivors re-build and live their lives with dignity and learn to carry their trauma lightly. Let us work together to create more cohesive and stronger societies and a future without terrorism.

Thank you.