



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

"Surviving Terrorism: The Power of Connections" High Level Event

20 August 2021, 9.00 a.m. – 11.00 a.m. EDT (online)

Statement by Mr. Hasan Wahhab Al-Araji

Iraq

Under-Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning. I would like to thank the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism for inviting me to participate in this discussion. My name is Hasan Wahhab Al-Araji, I am from Baghdad, and I am a Human Rights Defender. For most of my time I have been working on protecting and improving the respect for Human Rights in Iraq. I lost 2 of my direct cousins in 2 different terrorist suicide attacks and lost my best friend Mohammad in a third attack.

The International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism is dedicated to respecting our rights and our sacrifices. It is a high priority occasion, and it is important to remember us and to feel the solidarity and resilience and to ensure we are not alone.

This day also provides a chance to demand and obtain the rights of the victims and to remind countries of our suffering and the needs of all victims from across the world. Remembering the crimes and victims of terrorism helps us to learn lessons for future generations that will contribute to reducing the terrorist's narrative.

www.un.org/victimsofterrorism/en/international-day-2021

[#UNiteforVictimsofTerrorism](https://twitter.com/UNiteforVictimsofTerrorism)

Attending today makes me feel love and peace from the world. Connection on different levels help to restore the integration and rehabilitation of victims of terrorism and their families into society, relieves resentment and hatred, and reduces thoughts of revenge.

To be in touch with my fellow victims from around the globe, sharing their success stories and hearing from others, makes me feel I'm not alone, because many victims are sharing the same suffering and challenges, and in some cases their situations are worse and more difficult than mine.

The measures imposed by states during the COVID pandemic, restricted all of our rights and freedoms, but these were doubly challenging and violating for victims of terrorism and their families, especially marginalized and vulnerable groups such as senior people, women, children and people with disabilities.

Many victims have lost their jobs and their livelihoods. They have lost their social relationships and connections. Governments have not been able to give priority to victims of terrorism, rather, they were given regular aid without taking into account the specific psychological pressure and needs of victims and their families.

Many victims were affected by the closure of government institutions and the suspension of registration in the compensation system leaving them alone to suffer for a very long time.

Under-Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we look towards our future, I remain concerned about many other victims, and especially in my region , so I call upon the international community to prioritise work to improve the compensation system and facilitate registration, to double the efforts to increase capacity building programmes that include victims from across the globe, to create a powerful network of victims of terrorism that are able to speak out and call for their needs to be met and contribute to share their stories.

In my humble experience, all the efforts to support victims of terrorism cannot be achieved without a real will from Member States to collaborate and consider victims of terrorism as active key partners and beneficiaries for all related decisions and future plans.

Finally, I urge you to do all you can to ensure justice and accountability for victims of terrorism, and to bring the perpetrators to justice and hold them accountable.

Thank you.