



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 Ms. Maureen Basnicki

Canada

Under-Secretary-General,
Ambassadors,
my fellow victims, or survivors if one prefers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

My name is Maureen Basnicki, and I would like to thank the United Nations for inviting me to share my experience with you today. Firstly, I would like to say that my thoughts are with the people of Afghanistan, particularly of the women and children affected by the current situation, and of course the victims of terrorism. Connecting victims internationally is a powerful tool to fight terrorism.

My world was shattered when my beloved husband, Ken, was murdered in the 9/11 attacks in 2001. He was connecting with his colleagues at a conference on the 106th floor of the World Trade Center, in the Windows of the World restaurant.

I was on a layover in Mainz, Germany as an Air Canada Flight Attendant and my role was to look after the safety and security of my passengers. 90 countries had citizens murdered in the 9/11 attacks. And an airplane was used as a weapon to murder my husband.

I didn't lose my husband; he was taken away.

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

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9/11 also took away my ability to continue with my career and my role as a wife, as a Mother to my two children who were thankfully approaching adulthood and had a solid foundation.

I was supposed to have a computer date with Ken on Thursday, September the 13th. He never came home and computers still remain a trigger for me today.

My world exists as pre 9/11 and post 9/11. Today the world exists as pre covid pandemic and hopefully soon post pandemic. Perhaps now people will understand better, how, through no fault of your own - life changes dramatically!

I want to remember and honour Ken and make sure the world doesn't forget - not just the hate and horror of "that day" but also the humanity and kindness that followed.

Ken was a community service guy and always admired our women and men who served their country. I share that admiration and because it was our armed forces that played such a vital role in battling terrorism, and I would like to thank them. There were many, in uniform or not, who were willing to drop everything to assist immediately after the attacks and in the recovery. We must celebrate these unsung heroes all the while we remember the victims.

Even though I'm still healing, I'm reaching out to try and redefine 9/11 to a Day of Service in Canada. It will make a "World of Difference!" and I hope it will be a positive teaching experience for our children and our grandchildren.

Staying connected has a tremendous benefit to my mental health. Covid has provided many more international video calls and as one of the few Canadian cross border victims I cherish the friends I have made through the UN events.

Peer support is vital for the healing process for the majority of victims, and it brings us out of our "cocoon". It helps our mental health and supports our advocacy because we victims and survivors who are left behind, feel connected with others who "get it."

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Olympics have just ended, and the flame was extinguished until the next time. Like the Olympics I see the UN as a global organization connecting countries with hope for the future. I don't ever want to see the flame be extinguished!

Victims want to be a vital part in the fight against terrorism, uniting and bridging our differences together. The UN is like a road connecting the villages and its citizens.

This is the best living legacy I can create for my beloved husband, Ken, and the other victim's family members that I have been honoured to meet.

And as the saying goes.... I'd like to end with: "Be the change you want to see in the world!"

Thank you.