



UN GLOBAL CONGRESS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM

Advancing the rights & needs of victims of terrorism

Closing Remarks by Mr. Raffi Gregorian

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United Nations Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism

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Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I do have the honour to close the first day of the United Nations first Congress of Victims of Terrorism. I am particularly heartened at the overwhelming attendance from across the world; Member States, civil society, private sector, victims' associations, and victims themselves all gathered here today to begin to make a difference.

Today has also demonstrated the breadth of the issues facing victims of terrorism and has provoked some very interesting discussions on topics of great importance for victims and survivors of terrorism, most particularly, as I heard earlier this afternoon on conflict-related sexual violence and terrorism based on xenophobia, racism and intolerance including on the basis of religion or belief.

It also provided many ideas and solutions on ways to harmonise and improve our systems to support and protect victims.

We have been inspired by the courage and resilience of victims and survivors who, despite the challenges they have faced themselves, you have faced yourselves, work tirelessly to improve the experiences of those who come after you, whether in working to prevent future attacks, or in setting up support mechanisms and organisations to support other victims.

I particularly wish to express my gratitude to Soad, Philippe, Laura, Sudirman and Zannah for sharing their incredible work with us. It truly is remarkable to hear what they have achieved. I also thank the victims who participated in today's Call-to-Action, for their courage, eloquence and determination to stand up and call for recognition, protection and promotion of the rights and needs of victims of terrorism across the world.



We also had the opportunity today to listen to victims' voices and learn about how survivors cope with the life-long trauma and impact of terrorist attacks through the Memories film.

For victims and survivors, for whom this is their first major UN event, I understand some of you perhaps did not understand the way some Member States engage and debate here in New York. While such debate is in fact one of the UN's purposes, it is normal for us here. But for those of you who found it upsetting, let me remind you that we have counsellors available as well as the dedicated wellness room.

For tomorrow's programme, it brings further enriching discussions, helping us to consider what actions we can take to realise the rights of victims of terrorism.

In its Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the General Assembly has made clear that respect for human rights for all and the rule of law for all are the fundamental basis for the fight against terrorism, and that the rights of victims must be entrenched in all UN and Member State efforts to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism.

Thus, I look forward to joining you for tomorrow's discussions, exploring the multi-dimensional approaches that can be taken based on human rights and rule of law to support victims.

I would like to now invite you all to a welcome reception in the Delegates' Dining Room, co-hosted by UNOCT, and the co-Chairs of the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism, the Republic of Iraq and the Kingdom of Spain. We look forward to seeing you all there in just a few moments.

Thank you all and this concludes Day One.