

Statement of Sarah Tikolo, Kenya

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

21 August 2019

Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General, Ambassadors, my fellow victims, Ladies and Gentlemen.

My name is Sarah Tikolo. I am from Nairobi in Kenya. On the 7th August 1998, my husband Geoffrey Moses Namai was killed in the attack against the United States of America Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya.

I instantly became a widow at 21 years old with a 4 month old son called Nigeel Andiika Namai.

I have lived with the pain of this for many years and it has been hard on my side. Having a son has helped me. So, has being around my family and my friends - who have been very supportive.

I wanted to be a role model to my son, to be strong for him, to help him live his dreams, and to be there for him. I have strengthened my role to be both a mother and a father - so that he wouldn't feel left out or feel something was missing.

I recently decided that in order to help my son and myself, that I needed to forgive. This is the only way for me to move forward.

Holding on to unforgiveness, bitterness and anger was not helping it at all. In fact, it was doing more harm to me physically and emotionally.

That is why I now have a job as a janitor at the US Embassy, Nairobi, Kenya. I have a means to keep and support my family, and how to get support my son who is pursuing his studies at university. I couldn't be more proud of him and what he has achieved.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to share my story today and to be able to represent many victims of terrorism, especially those in Kenya who don't have a voice.

I would like to ask the United Nations to help all the victims to receive proper compensation, to help us rebuild our lives, particularly in getting an education and provide support to help others who go through trauma, both in the short term but most importantly in the long term.

Thank you for listening to me.