

**Sayed Mushtaq Hussaini's statement for the Launch of the**

**Exhibition**

**Surviving Terrorism: Victims' Voices**

**Friday, 17 August 2018**

**Ladies and gentlemen**

My name is Sayed Mushtaq Hussaini. I am one of the survivors of a terrorist suicide attack that occurred in a cultural centre on the morning of 28 December 2017 in Kabul, Afghanistan. The attacker detonated his explosives amongst the ordinary civilians who were present for a panel discussion on the protection of civilians.

This was a bloody attack against freedom of speech, which claimed lives of 42 and injured around over 75 others. The victims were all ordinary civilians including boys, girls, men and women.

On that day, as a journalist, I was busy with the media coverage of the event. Within 30 minutes of the event starting, an explosion took place close to me. I lost my consciousness, but after few minutes I regained

consciousness and noticed that I was burnt by the explosion, with serious skin damage in some parts of my body. I could hear the children and women yelling for help, but I could not do anything for them, and I managed to escape to a nearby health facility.

On the same day, I was informed by some of my friends that some media entities including BBC and Afghan Voice News Agency had reported about my death. This made me more frustrated, so we started posting on social media that I was alive.

I will not forget that difficult day for the rest of my life, because I still feel the suffering and pain of that moment. I felt great sorrow when I had learned about the deaths of my dearest friends on that dark day.

Following that tragic incident, myself and my fellow survivors were in dire need of medical treatment. We received immediate action from the Government and media protection entities, when we were transferred to the Istiqlal hospital, but I would like to mention that, despite the ongoing

situation in Afghanistan, our health facilities are lacking the capacity to provide the required medical treatment for the victims of terrorism. Also, most victims are unable to afford the expense of their treatment abroad. I can give you one example, that due to the nonexistence of sufficient medical treatment, one of the survivors (Mr. Sajadi) gradually lost his visibility after spending some days in the hospital.

Despite, the burns and injuries I received on my hands, I am still feeling numbness and that is why I am unable to work with my hands for more than a few minutes continuously. I have been away from the media for the last six months and was unable to attend my University exams, which is frustrating. I am requesting the General Assembly need to pay more attention for the victims of terrorism and for their timely medical treatments in house or abroad, as the Afghan Nation is suffering a lot by the ongoing terrorist attacks.

I call upon all the participating Member States who are here today to listen to the suffering and experiences of the victims of terrorism: please be

more serious on fighting against terrorism as well as other radicalized groups. Please do not leave the people of Afghanistan alone in such a special situation, especially the victims and those children who lost their parents in such incidents.

Finally, my message to the victims of terrorism: We have all paid a huge price for the causes of our independence, awareness and awakening of our nations, we will never back down from our main aims which are ultimately ensuring lasting peace and stability, and the development of our countries.

Thank you.