

«Surviving Terrorism: Victims' Voices'»

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Statement by The Permanent Representative of Norway, Tore Hattrem

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

Let me begin by thanking the UN Counter-Terrorism Office under the leadership of you, Mr. Voronkov, together with the Department of Public Information and the Mission of Spain for organizing this event.

It is important to put the focus on not only how we prevent and combat terrorism, but on how we work through the ramifications and trauma after an attack. Awareness about the challenges victims of terrorism face is vital.

And to you, Kamzy and Viljar: Thank you for taking the time to make this inspiring documentary and for travelling here to present your stories in person. More importantly: Thank you for inviting us into your lives and sharing the difficulties and challenges you have experienced. The same can be said to others in the panel and all victims of terror who raise their voices.

I believe I am not the only one who found this documentary very powerful to watch. The attack will forever stand as a dark day in Norwegian history. What makes this attack especially gruesome is how it viciously targeted children and young people joined together by their engagement and desire to influence the future of our country. I myself was a youth politician once and believe youth engagement represents a core element of the Norwegian democracy.

It is inspiring to hear how you have been able to cope with the situation in the aftermath. You have found ways to make it a part of your lives. I admire your resilience, and your strong voices, which - despite the terrorist's attempt to silence them - can be heard loudly and clearly. We need your voices.

Kamzy, you see it as your responsibility as a politician to learn from the attack to prevent a similar tragedy happening in the future. Not only is it admirable of you to take this on, but I believe it is an important example to follow for governments and the international community.

To better address tomorrow's challenges, we must learn from each other through sharing experiences and best practices. In this regards, Norway is convinced that the Support Portal established by the UNOCT can play a vital role.

Let me take this opportunity to share with you Norway's response to the terror attack and our efforts on supporting the victims:

Overall, the response of the Norwegian government was not to give into the ways of the terrorist, but to uphold the pillars of human rights and the rule of law.

As the former Prime Minister of Norway, Jens Stoltenberg, said in the documentary, our response was more democracy, more openness and more humanity.

The Norwegian government has taken a broad approach concerning the support and rehabilitation of victims. Of the many measures that have been implemented, I wish to highlight two particularly important aspects:

First, all victims receive health services, both on the primary and specialized level. The regional resource centers [mentioned in the documentary] gives all victims across the country access to a support system, which enhances cooperation across sectors. Securing the necessary services is vital for both the physical and psychological future of victims.

Secondly, the right to compensation and the right to counsel are essential in helping the victims and making sure they feel seen and heard. It is imperative that victims receive information about their own rights and remain informed about the trial process as it takes place.

Last, but not least, we must keep in mind that victims of terrorism have different needs and different views as to the pace and appropriate means to move on after experiencing trauma. It is imperative that these voices are heard and they must weigh heavily when we respond to the collective trauma of terrorism. This is only possible by including them in the discussion.

Finally, I would like to say that I welcome your input to Norwegian policies in this area, and encourage all Member States to make use of the Support Portal so that we can learn from your experiences and solutions. I am convinced we can be even better prepared if we work together.

Thank you.