



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM
UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT)**

**Statement by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov,
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of
Counter-Terrorism**

**Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism
24 September 2019**

Your Excellency, Mr. Josep Borrell
Your Excellency, Mr. Salahuddin Rabbani

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to warmly thank the Permanent Representatives of Afghanistan and Spain for their leadership and vision in establishing this Group.

I congratulate all of you for holding the first Ministerial meeting of the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism.

Now more than ever, Member States recognize that victims of terrorism have unique rights and needs, different than those of victims of other forms of violence and serious crimes.

We have recently seen the international community come together to support victims of terrorism in unprecedented ways.

Just a month ago, we commemorated for the second time the International Day of Remembrance of, and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism.

Secretary-General Guterres underscored the determination of the United Nations system to work closely with the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism:

Our readiness to work with you to find innovative ways to support the rights of victims to justice, reparations, healing and livelihoods, building on the efforts of the General Assembly to enhance international cooperation in this regard.

Together with the Group of Friends, these efforts have included two resolutions dedicated to victims of terrorism:

One adopted in 2017 to establish the International Day of Remembrance of, and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism.

And the second, adopted last May, to Enhance International Cooperation to Assist Victims of Terrorism.

This is a culmination of many years of hard work by Member States, civil society, and the United Nations to get victims high on the agenda.

I am heartened that victims are now able to get the recognition they deserve.

This Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism has a crucial role to play in keeping this momentum.

Indeed, this is just the beginning.

As we continue to witness devastating terrorist attacks, we cannot limit ourselves to words of sympathy.

We need to act to support Member States and victims of terrorism through determined leadership, effective capacity-building, and international solidarity.

I am asking the Group of Friends to take up, and live up to this responsibility, in close partnership with my Office.

I applaud you for putting forward an ambitious – but immensely practical agenda – as reflected in the Plan of Action for 2020.

You have the full backing of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism and the UN Counter-Terrorism Center to help implement this Plan.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we approach the seventh review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in 2020, the United Nations will continue to ensure that victims' voices are clearly heard, that their rights are respected and that their recovery and rehabilitation needs are addressed.

The latest UNCCT photographic exhibition, focused on the Power of Resilience, is testament to the importance of recognizing the rights and needs of victims.

This exhibition was launched by the Secretary-General on the International Day of Victims of Terrorism, in partnership with this Group of Friends.

It clearly illustrates the many different approaches, ways, and means to support victims in their recovery – from family, to networks, to psychosocial support.

All these approaches are important, on different levels.

They are important for the personal recovery of victims and survivors.

And they are important to make communities and ultimately societies stronger, more resilient and able to better promote and protect the rights of their citizens.

As Executive Director of the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre, I commit to having the Centre's Global Victims of Terrorism Support Programme address the needs and rights of victims as a priority thematic area in the work of my Office and in the work of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact.

This Global Programme interconnects the myriad of issues surrounding victims.

Its advocacy, outreach, networking, policy-making and capacity-building activities are all interdependent and provide a coherent response to the complex needs that confront victims on a daily basis.

With your support, we intend to broaden the scope and reach of the Programme.

I am profoundly grateful to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Spain, Morocco, and Colombia for their generous contributions to the Programme.

But if we are going to expand our efforts even further, we will need all your help.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

One of the keys to making concrete progress in advancing the victims' agenda is to make sure that we approach counter-terrorism through the lens of victims.

Our approach needs to be victim-centric, also in preventing and countering violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

The next milestone on this road – our road – will be the Second Counter-Terrorism Week at the United Nations during the summer next year.

It will have at its heart, the first Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism.

We look forward to working with all of you – Member States, victims' organizations, victims and survivors – to ensure that the Congress focusses on the concrete and very real needs of all victims of terrorism worldwide.

I thank you for your commitment, your leadership and your support – you can fully count on ours.

Thank you.