



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Prepared in collaboration with the
International Centre for
Counter-Terrorism - The Hague

FROM VICTIMS OF TERRORISM TO **MESSENGERS** **FOR PEACE**

a strategic approach



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME
Vienna

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UNITED NATIONS
Vienna, 2020

"We can't write the magic, there's no blueprint,
it's a human process ... but this is a starting point."

Max Boon
12 December 2019

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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<i>iv</i>
INTRODUCTION	1
Aim	2
Background	3
Rationale	4
Structure of the publication	6
1. RECOGNIZING THE RIGHTS AND ROLE OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM	8
1.1 Categories of victims of terrorism	9
1.2 Rights of victims of terrorism	10
2. A THREE-PRONGED VICTIM-CENTRIC STRATEGIC APPROACH	14
2.1 Strategic pathway I: Establish and enhance the rights of and assistance to victims of terrorism	15
2.2 Strategic pathway II: Facilitate victims' efforts to organize representative bodies	17
2.3 Strategic pathway III: Support the creation of an independent platform for training and outreach activities related to preventing and countering violent extremism	18
3. THEORY IN PRACTICE: VICTIMS' VOICES INITIATIVE	24
3.1 Preliminary scoping resulting in a strategic approach	25
3.2 Pilot test	26
3.3 Creating an independent platform organization for victims' voices	27
3.4 Organizing victim-centric activities to prevent and counter violent extremism	31
4. KEY TAKEAWAYS	44
Conclusion	45

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The present publication, *From victims of terrorism to messengers for peace: a strategic approach*, is aimed at enhancing the capacity of governments and other stakeholders seeking to increase support for victims of terrorism in general, and for those who are willing and ready to become messengers for peace in particular.

The publication draws upon the work of the Victims' Voices initiative, which was started in 2012 to allow victims of terrorism to share their unique experiences first-hand to help promote peace and delegitimize justifications for terrorist violence. Drawing on the results of victims' direct engagements with over 8,000 youths across Indonesia, the Victims' Voices initiative shows that victims' stories are most impactful when shared directly by victims, of their own agency and in their own words. The initiative also underscores the need for victims' rights to be respected and the necessity of a neutral platform through which victims of terrorism can connect with and engage different target audiences to bring about demonstrable positive impacts.

The publication provides a strategic framework for policy- and decision makers to explore and potentially help to put in place similar victim-centric support systems and initiatives in different jurisdictions and contexts.

Specifically, the publication promotes a three-pronged strategic approach to prevent and counter violent extremism:

- (a) Establish and enhance the rights of victims of terrorism and long-term assistance for them;
- (b) Facilitate victims' organization of representative bodies to represent their interests and enable them to come together as peers;
- (c) Support the creation of an independent platform for victim-centric training and outreach activities related to preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE).

The experience of the Victims' Voices initiative provides valuable lessons for implementing an approach aimed at involving victims of terrorism in P/CVE-related activities in a systematic and sustainable manner. This publication details the lessons learned and the challenges that may be encountered in both developing and putting into practice such an initiative.

Key takeaways to serve as building blocks for similar endeavours are the following: knowing that victims' stories have impact; considering that there are contextual differences that can affect impact, approach and victims' readiness; recognizing that neutral platforms are necessary; acknowledging the centrality of victims in the process; appreciating the fact that victims occupy a politicized space; and understanding how to assess impact.

INTRODUCTION

Victims of terrorism occupy a complex space in modern democratic societies. Often, they are citizens who are deliberately, albeit opportunistically, targeted by terrorists, but even as a collective they are usually made up of disparate individuals who have little in common. Just as often, citizens are regarded as symbolic representations of their respective governments, but it is as individuals that they suffer the consequences of any attack.¹ Accordingly, as citizens fall victim to acts of terrorism designed to bring chaos to and fracture society as a whole, they need focused and dedicated mechanisms of support from governments and international bodies to ensure that their rights as individuals are upheld and protected.² The Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism recognized victims of terrorism as victims of grave violations of human rights, whom States have a special obligation to protect.³

The Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power, adopted by the General Assembly in 1985, provides recommendations to ensure that victims of crime, including terrorism, receive access to justice and fair treatment, restitution, compensation and social assistance.⁴ In doing so, it also provides invaluable guidance for States to support and fulfil the rights of victims, defined as “persons who, individually or collectively, have suffered harm, including physical or mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss or substantial impairment of their fundamental rights, through acts or omissions that are in violation of criminal laws operative within Member States, including those laws proscribing criminal abuse of power.”⁵ However, many governments have yet to fully implement these recommendations, partly owing to resource limitations, but also to the enormous challenge of providing for the rights of, and the necessary support for, such a diverse range of victims and needs. While the rights set out in the Declaration are common to all victims of crime, particular attention to respecting and upholding the rights of victims of terrorism is merited, for reasons articulated in the present publication, one of which is the potential for a more effective global counter-terrorism strategy.

Supporting victims of terrorism, especially in their critical hour of need,⁶ demonstrates social solidarity between States and their citizens. When an act of terror is viewed as political communication by perpetrators seeking to deliver a message of intimidation and fear, States that provide comprehensive support for victims communicate in return that they stand by the individuals most directly affected by the violence. In essence, it conveys a message of collective responsibility,⁷ which is both a signifier of moral value and an exercise in societal perseverance.⁸

¹ See Brian M. Jenkins, “International terrorism: a new kind of warfare” (June 1974), and Alex P. Schmid, “Terrorism: the definitional problem”, *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law*, vol. 36, No. 2 (2004).

² See Ilaria Bottigliero, Lyal S. Sunga and Clive Walker, “The victims of terrorism”, in *Routledge Handbook of Law and Terrorism*, Genevieve Lennon and Clive Walker, eds. (London, Routledge, 2015).

³ A/HRC/20/14.

⁴ General Assembly resolution 40/34, annex.

⁵ *Ibid.*, para. 1.

⁶ See Global Counterterrorism Forum, Madrid Memorandum on Good Practices for Assistance to Victims of Terrorism Immediately after the Attack and in Criminal Proceedings (2012).

⁷ A/HRC/20/14.

⁸ Markus Keck and Patricia Sakdapolrak, “What is social resilience? Lessons learned and ways forward”, *Erkunde*, vol. 67, No. 1 (March 2013).

Beyond symbolism, victims, when their rights are respected and effective mechanisms exist to support them, can play a key role as important witnesses within the criminal justice system.⁹ Moreover, when provided with the necessary tools and a safe platform, victims of terrorism have the potential to become messengers for peace who can provide an alternative to, or counter, the divisive narratives of terrorists and the justifications used to incite violence.¹⁰ Victims can attest directly to their suffering and speak out personally against injustice. Their stories showcase the destructiveness of terrorist violence, and their willingness to come forward and share them reflects a resilience that appeals to common human values, which can persuade a person to rethink the utility of violence.

However, any serious involvement of victims of terrorism in greater national security concerns has to consider victims' specific needs and the related systematic support mechanisms as a *conditio sine qua non*. Governments can take steps to ensure that such rights and needs are respected by establishing and strengthening policies, legislation and mechanisms that are sensitive to the victims' perspectives and aspirations. Further measures include improving the ability of the relevant agencies whose purview covers victim matters to deliver their services and enhancing community support networks.

Even so, it is important to acknowledge that not all victims of terrorism will either desire or be able to assume a role in efforts to counter violent extremist narratives. Many victims take years to recover physically from their injuries and/or come to terms with their losses, and many remain deeply traumatized. For some, revisiting the memories of a terrorist attack may stir painful emotions, which can have detrimental effects on their physical and mental well-being. Others, after a life-changing tragedy, may prefer to focus their energies on more personal affairs, while some may wish to leave their bad experiences firmly in the past. For the sake of the victims' welfare, respect for their fundamental rights and personal goals must be the main consideration behind any victim-centric initiatives, to prevent any risks of secondary victimization in the process.¹¹ While victims of terrorism can make meaningful contributions to the state of peace in general, their participation must be entirely voluntary and in no way should victims be instrumentalized, or feel pressured or coerced into adopting such roles.

A strategic approach that prioritizes individual victims' needs and rights, recognizes the context of the sociopolitical environment for the victim, emphasizes collaborative partnerships and enhances coordination between all the relevant stakeholders in government and civil society is key for victims who are ready and willing to begin their own process of becoming involved.

AIM

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has developed this publication in collaboration with the Victims' Voices initiative and the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) to provide support and guidance to governments and other stakeholders seeking to support victims of terrorism and the important role they can play as messengers for peace. The initial development of the publication was made possible through the financial support of the Netherlands.

⁹ See United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *Good Practices in Supporting Victims of Terrorism within the Criminal Justice Framework* (Vienna, 2015).

¹⁰ See Alex P. Schmid, "Strengthening the role of victims and incorporating victims in efforts to counter violence extremism and terrorism" (The Hague, International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2012), Hedayah (international centre of excellence for countering violent extremism) and International Centre for Counter-Terrorism "Developing effective counter narrative frameworks for countering violent extremism: meeting note (September 2014), and Thomas Samuel, "In pursuit of a degree" (2019).

¹¹ Secondary victimization refers to a deprivation that is not directly inflicted in the primary criminal act, but by other persons or institutions that victims interact with in the aftermath; see Leo Montada, "Coping with life stress: injustice and the question 'who is responsible?'," in *Social Justice in Human Relations*, vol. 2, Herman Steensma and Riël Vermunt, eds. (Boston, United States, Springer, 1991), and Antony Pemberton and Inge Vanfraechem, "Victims' victimization experiences and their need for justice", in *Victims and Restorative Justice*, Inge Vanfraechem, Daniela Bolívar Fernández and Ivo Aertsen, eds. (London, Routledge, 2015).

This publication is a strategic resource for policymakers and practitioners working on matters relating to, and out of concern for, victims of terrorism in Member States. It reiterates the necessity of establishing and strengthening national frameworks for the protection and support of victims of terrorism to aid their recovery. Considerable efforts have been made in recent years to promote the rights of victims of terrorism and to identify good practices in legislation, policy and protocol at the national level. More can similarly be done to address the involvement of victims of terrorism, should they so choose, in preventive efforts aimed at deglorifying violence and stemming new recruitment into violent groups.

Primarily, this publication serves as a resource to shine a spotlight on the role that victims of terrorism can potentially play in P/CVE when structures to meet their needs are in place. It suggests possible steps that governments could take to support the creation of a strategic framework for victims to become effective messengers for peace. It offers guidance based on the experience of the ongoing Victims' Voices initiative and tools that can be adapted to suit local contexts to bolster existing P/CVE efforts through a victim-centric approach to provide an alternative to, and/or counter, violent extremist narratives.

This publication has been written with an awareness that the generalized descriptions made within refer to dynamic processes involving complex individuals. The many intricacies, unfortunately, cannot be sufficiently addressed in these pages without straying too far from the stated intention. The myriad challenges relating to organizing P/CVE endeavours in the field, as well as those of the risks of secondary victimization, are also recognized; where possible, these considerations are expounded upon in the relevant sections. In essence, this publication presents the experiences of a victim-led initiative to showcase an approach to P/CVE that can involve victims of terrorism in a structured and sustainable manner, while remaining mindful of each victim's own unique set of circumstances, experiences, needs, belief systems and aspirations.

BACKGROUND

Victims' Voices is an initiative spearheaded by a victim of a suicide bomb attack in Jakarta,¹² implemented in Indonesia with the indispensable guidance of local subject matter experts from the public and civil sectors and initial support from ICCT. The initiative aims to guide victims of terrorism through the process of becoming effective messengers for peace and against violent extremism through a civil society organization partner that works together with vulnerable groups in society. The initiative ensures the creation of a neutral platform from which victims of terrorism can connect with and directly engage different target audiences across the country within a structured framework. The initiative further facilitates direct interactions aimed at reconciliation between victims and former perpetrators of terrorist violence. In any and all of its activities, and at each process level, the primary considerations are the well-being and personal agency of the victims who choose to utilize the platform; thus, a safe space for all platform participants is central to the actualization and accomplishments of the endeavour.

In the Victims' Voices experience, through careful planning, incremental trust-building measures and sensitivity to local dynamics, stories of the survival, perseverance and forgiveness of victims, in concert with other credible voices, have combined to form unique and impactful narratives that emphasize common human values, acceptance of differences and harmonious co-existence. These are the foundational elements making up a victim-centric approach to developing alternative narratives and counter-narratives against violent extremism.

¹² Co-author Max Boon fell victim to a suicide bomb attack inside the JW Marriott hotel in Jakarta in July 2009. He lost both his legs and suffered multiple shrapnel injuries and burns to over 70 per cent of his body.

RATIONALE

Acts of terrorism are often plotted in ideological abstraction, aimed at producing theatrical spectacles to spread fear and confusion in society in order to bring about political change.¹³ Terrorists often stage attacks on soft targets, not aimed at any specific individual. Yet in any terrorist attack, it is individuals who suffer the direct physical and psychological impact, as well as grave and lasting effects on their personal lives.

Despite that, the victims often remain faceless. Most high-profile terrorist attacks are remembered in society's collective memory by the identities, motives and tactics of the perpetrators. Victims of those incidents, however, regularly take the form of statistics denoting the magnitude and significance of the attacks, at times even as a means to rate how "successful" an assault was. Similarly, in the eyes of the terrorist perpetrators, those who fall victim to their acts of violence are already conceptually dehumanized, regarded either as mere collateral damage or as "subhuman", deserving of harm for all that they represent.¹⁴

Putting a face to victims of terrorism, that is, "re-humanizing" them, lets them reclaim their sense of self and the voice that was silenced by the hurt and trauma inflicted upon them. Beyond arguments of moral justice, the process of regaining this sense of self has important socio-psychological significance, with practical implications. At the individual level, it helps victims with their healing process.¹⁵ The reaffirmation makes them no longer simply abstract concepts but unique beings deserving of their rights and deserving to be acknowledged and heard. When the emotional needs of victims are met, and when they feel recognized as the persons they have always been, they are better able to negotiate their new circumstances, reintegrate into society and return to life as they choose. From a broader analytical perspective, the personal experiences of victims of terrorism are inextricably woven into society's collective history. Victims are the social markers that define a society's response to a threat to its people's way of life and how it cares for the weak and wounded. The way a society takes collective responsibility for its most vulnerable in the aftermath of a national tragedy, and its subsequent protection of them, including by preventing similar future harm – through policies, legislation or support structures – can help to strengthen society as a whole. This, in turn, builds resilience against other threats of attack from beyond its borders, as well as those that may arise from within.

Many important efforts from varied situational contexts and at different levels of society point to a consensus on the virtues, and perhaps the obligation, of "re-humanizing" victims of violence. Victims' impact statements during trials of violent criminal perpetrators have become routine in systems that emphasize restorative criminal justice processes.¹⁶ "Right to truth" commissions allow victims to tell of sufferings in ways they previously could not when they lived in conflict situations or under authoritarian rule.¹⁷ Victims' personal testimonies have been recorded for wide dissemination by civil society and

¹³ See Jenkins, "International terrorism" (see footnote 1), and Tyler Cowen, "Terrorism as theatre: analysis and policy implications", *Public Choice*, vol. 128, No. 1 (July 2006).

¹⁴ In its Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the United Nations recognizes the dehumanization of victims of terrorism as a contributing factor to conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism (General Assembly resolution 60/288, annex). See also David Livingstone Smith, *Less Than Human: Why We Dehumanize, Enslave and Exterminate Others* (New York, St. Martin's Press, 2011).

¹⁵ See Nurit Shnabel and Arie Nadler, "A needs-based model of reconciliation: satisfying the differential emotional needs of victim and perpetrator as a key to promoting reconciliation", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 94, No. 1 (January 2008).

¹⁶ See Julian V. Roberts and Edna Erez, "Communication in sentencing: exploring the expressive function of victim impact statements", *International Review of Victimology*, vol. 10, No. 3 (January 2004), and Kim M. E. Lens, Antony Pemberton and Stefan Bogaerts, "Heterogeneity in victim participation: a new perspective on delivering a victim impact statement", *European Journal of Criminology*, vol. 10, No. 4 (June 2013).

¹⁷ See Cheryl Lawther, "Victims' needs and dealing with the past", in *Victims of Terrorism: A Comparative and Interdisciplinary Study*, Orla Lynch and Javier Argomaniz, eds. (London, Routledge, 2014), and Claire Moon, "Healing past violence: traumatic assumptions and therapeutic interventions in war and reconciliation", *Journal of Human Rights*, vol. 8, No. 1 (March 2009).

international governmental organizations alike to help shine a light on their individual plights.¹⁸ Autobiographical books have been written and movies made with the backing of commercial enterprises.¹⁹ Across the board, these undertakings seek to bring the personal accounts of victims, their very human stories of suffering and survival, to a broad audience, partly in recognition of the inherent ability of such stories to move and inspire. Victims, because of what happened directly to them, possess moral credibility when they speak out against the injustice they personally faced.²⁰

Over the years, there has been no shortage of efforts from around the world led by victims of terrorism themselves,²¹ reflecting their motivation, of their own agency, to do something constructive with their experiences and make relevant connections.

The Victims' Voices initiative, which organized an inception study in 2012, draws inspiration from those that came before, and has since simultaneously helped to shape, and in turn been shaped by, evolving debates on good policy and practice relating to matters concerning victims of terrorism.²² These include topical issues such as the strengthening of victims' rights, building the capacity of victims' groups to strengthen collective power and, in particular, developing structures to engage ready and willing victims in collaborative outreach activities to promote peace and delegitimize justifications for terrorist violence. In the Victims' Voices experience, the victims' stories maintain the necessary relevance and relatability to the immediate locale and are focused either on positive messages of survival, perseverance and forgiveness or on constructive responses to grievances both real and perceived. The stories of the victims further showcase the destructive consequences of terrorist actions for actual lives and deglorify violence at the most human level.

Experience thus far shows that with proper institutional support, dedicated mechanisms that include an inbuilt monitoring and evaluation system, and ultimately an approach that is centred on victims' concerns and sensitivities, victims of terrorism have a demonstrable positive impact on the target audiences they directly engage.

"We have to be able to forgive more, not harbour any grudges, be brave enough to express our opinion, and we can certainly change from [our] bad pasts."

15-year-old youth from Poso, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, 29 August 2018

¹⁸ As examples, the now defunct Global Survivors Network, co-founded by Carie Lemack, and the Office of Counter-Terrorism.

¹⁹ As examples, Jason McCartney, *After Bali*, (Melbourne, Slattery Media Group, 2003), a memoir by an Australian football player who was in the 2002 Bali bombings; Jeff Bauman and Brett Witter, *Stronger* (New York, Grand Central Publishing, 2014), a memoir of co-author Bauman, a victim of the Boston marathon bombing, which later became a Hollywood movie; and "Remastered: the Miami Showband massacre", a 2019 documentary that follows Stephen Travers, one of the survivors of an ambush laid by a paramilitary group against the Miami Showband during the Northern Ireland Troubles in 1975, in his quest to find answers.

²⁰ Schmid, "Strengthening the role of victims" (see footnote 10).

²¹ As examples, l'Association française des Victimes du Terrorisme (www.afvt.org), Global Survivors Network, One World Strong Foundation (www.oneworldstrong.org) and Strength to Strength (<http://stosglobal.org/>).

²² Select international meetings on issues relating to victims of terrorism and policy, security, corrections and rehabilitation, emergency preparedness, health care and human rights, include: United Nations Interregional Crime and Research Institute (UNICRI) international workshop on upstream prevention and downstream disengagement, rehabilitation and reintegration, in Lucca, Italy, from 24 to 26 May 2011; seminar on dialogue and understanding on the sidelines of the third biennial review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy by the General Assembly, in New York on 27 June 2012; Global Counter-Terrorism Forum High-Level Conference on Victims of Terrorism, held in Madrid on 9 and 10 July 2012; the European Commission Radicalization Awareness Network Voices of Victims of Terrorism meeting, held in The Hague in November 2012; the Hedayah/Sisters against Violent Extremism round-table discussion on victims as a face of countering violent extremism, held in Vienna on 2 and 3 September 2013; the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre expert group meeting on victims' role in preventing violent extremism, held in Nairobi in June 2017; and the VIII International Congress for Victims of Terrorism, held in Nice, France, from 21 to 23 November 2019.

By early 2020, the Victims' Voices initiative in Indonesia had reached over 8,000 youths in locations across the country where terrorism-related activities have been reported. The data show that after direct engagements with victims of terrorism and other credible messengers, there were positive shifts in the youths' attitudes away from the use of violence.

The results indicated:

- A 27 per cent decrease in the number of youths willing or very willing to become war volunteers in Afghanistan, Iraq or the Syrian Arab Republic, representing 527 youths out of a total of 1,975 originally willing
- A 67 per cent decrease in the number of youths agreeing or strongly agreeing that they were entitled to take revenge if they or their family fell victim to an act of violence, representing 758 youths out of a total of 1,129 originally agreeing
- A 69 per cent decrease in the number of youths agreeing or strongly agreeing that they had to avenge the global persecution of their fellow adherents with the use of force or violence wherever they might be, representing 281 youths out of a total of 406 originally agreeing

STRUCTURE OF THE PUBLICATION

The present publication provides a strategic framework that can be used by policymakers and practitioners alike to explore and potentially help to put in place similar victim-centric support systems and initiatives in different jurisdictions and contexts. The first of the four main chapters looks at the growing international attention to the rights and role of victims of terrorism.

Chapter II examines the support structures and mechanisms needed to empower victims who are ready and willing to assume a role as messengers for peace and who can actively share their stories in outreach activities with target audiences. The chapter introduces a three-pronged process-oriented approach organized into focused pathways aimed at making the involvement of victims in P/CVE efforts both systematic and sustainable.

Chapter III features practical guidance for the preparation and implementation of a victim-centric approach to developing alternative narratives and counternarratives against violent extremism that are based on victims' personal stories recounted in their own words. Specific examples and lessons learned from the Victims' Voices initiative are shared to simultaneously illustrate the particularities of the socio-political landscape affecting the initiative and to provide a baseline for comparison across different contexts regarding the feasibility of a similar undertaking elsewhere.

Chapter IV then presents a set of takeaways and some critical reflections related to the involvement of victims of terrorism in P/CVE efforts.

1



CHAPTER I. RECOGNIZING THE RIGHTS AND ROLE OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM

In the light of international developments in threats to security, in 2006 the General Assembly adopted the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, with all Member States in broad agreement regarding a unified approach to combat terrorism. Four general pillars of action relating to practical capacity- and knowledge-building and coordination efforts were identified to either prevent the spread of terrorism or disrupt terrorists' plots, through improved capacity of Member States, while respecting human rights and the rule of law.²³ The first iteration of the strategy addressed victims of terrorism in relation to promoting victims' needs and readjustment to normal life.²⁴

Victims increasingly came to the forefront of the agendas of international meetings that explored the potential for victims' perspective and narratives as a form of pushback against those who espouse terrorist violence.²⁵ The General Assembly, in its review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, in 2012, thus additionally recognized "the role that victims of terrorism in all its form and manifestations can play, including in countering the appeal of terrorism",²⁶ reflecting a growing consideration in the policy world that when victims are given back the voices they lost, they can play a role in countering the threat of terrorism. The review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy followed the report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, in which the case was made that in recognizing victims of terrorism as victims whose core human rights had been violated, international counter-terrorism efforts would be strengthened.²⁷

The attention to core human rights also reflected growing international scrutiny of measures that fall under the heading of security responses to terrorism. In 2015, the Secretary-General put forth a Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, which makes a distinction between terrorism and violent extremism, cautioning against unnecessarily securitizing and subsuming under a counterterrorism response activities and conduct that fall short of being terrorist acts.²⁸ As the terrorism threat became more widespread with the rise of groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh), violent extremism was recognized as a contextual condition that was conducive to individuals turning to

²³ A/RES/60/288 of 8 September 2006, pp. 3–9.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4, para. 8, and p. 9, para. 1.

²⁵ For example, a United Nations symposium on supporting victims of terrorism was convened on 9 September 2008 in New York; 18 victims of terrorism from around the world were invited to share their stories there. See the symposium's report "Supporting victims of terrorism", published by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General in 2009. In a UNICRI workshop held in Lucca, Italy, from 24 to 26 May 2011, victims of terrorism were identified as key stakeholders in efforts to challenge extremist narratives. See report of the first international workshop on "Upstream prevention and downstream disengagement, rehabilitation and reintegration".

²⁶ The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review (General Assembly resolution 66/282).

²⁷ A/HRC/20/14, para. 14.

²⁸ A/70/674, para. 4.

terrorism,²⁹ and addressing the drivers of violent extremism was thus important for preventing terrorism.³⁰ Preventing and countering violent extremism therefore refers to systematic preventive measures that directly address the grievances driving violent extremism: the structural "push" factors of lack of socioeconomic opportunities, marginalization and discrimination, poor governance and violations of human rights and rule of law, prolonged and unresolved conflicts, and prison conditions; as well as the individual "pull" factors of personal motivations, collective grievance and victimization, distortion and misuse of beliefs, political ideologies and differences, and leadership and social networks.³¹

It was within such a framework that the role of victims of terrorism was set forth more concretely, and it was recommended that Member States "empower and enable victims to transform their loss and suffering into a constructive force for preventing violent extremism by providing them with online forums where they can tell their stories".³² Additionally, the rights and roles of victims of terrorism within the criminal justice framework have received similar attention with a view to increased support, in recognition of the fact that sound criminal justice processes are an integral part of an effective global counter-terrorism strategy.³³ Beyond the United Nations system, other multilateral and regional bodies have also offered their respective instruments in support of victims of terrorism, which include practical recommendations regarding how governments can put in place policies, processes and responses to strengthen the rights and role of victims of terrorism in criminal justice and counter-terrorism.³⁴

What follows in the chapters below is a way forward in strategically developing a victim-centric P/CVE initiative that supports victims in sharing their stories within a structured framework. To that end, strengthened victims' rights are a necessity; that process begins with identifying who victims of terrorism are, as well as the kinds of rights accorded to them.

1.1 CATEGORIES OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM

For the purposes of this publication, the categories of victims of terrorism applied by the Special Rapporteur in his 2012 report on proposed framework principles for securing the human rights of victims of terrorism are used:

Direct victims of terrorism	Natural persons who have been killed or have suffered serious physical or psychological injury as the result of an act of terrorism
Secondary victims of terrorism	Natural persons who are the next of kin or dependants of a direct victim of terrorism
Indirect victims of terrorism	Individuals who have suffered serious physical or psychological injury as the indirect result of an act of terrorism. This category includes: (a) members of the public (such as hostages or bystanders) who have been killed or injured through the use of potentially lethal force against suspected terrorists; (b) eyewitnesses who have sustained serious psychological harm as the result of witnessing a violent terrorist incident or its immediate aftermath;

²⁹ A/70/674.

³⁰ Security Council resolution 2178 (2014), paras. 15–19.

³¹ A/70/674.

³² *Ibid.*, para. 55 (e).

³³ See UNODC, *The Criminal Justice Response to Support Victims of Acts of Terrorism*, revised edition (2012), and UNODC, *Good Practices in Supporting Victims of Terrorism* (see footnote 9).

³⁴ For an overview, see UNODC, *Good Practices in Supporting Victims of Terrorism*, pp. 3–12, and Schmid, "Strengthening the role of victims" (see footnote 10).

(c) individuals who have been subjected to potentially lethal force by a public authority after being mistakenly identified as a suspected terrorist; and (d) rescue workers who suffer serious physical or psychological harm as the result of taking part in emergency relief

Potential victims of terrorism: For the purposes of promoting a comprehensive statement of basic rights and obligations in this sphere, potential victims of future terrorist acts are an important additional category.³⁵

These categories apply in the Victims' Voices initiative as well. The list is not exhaustive; debates continue in the cases of children of terrorist perpetrators who became either unwitting or unwilling participants in illicit activities,³⁶ as well as of individuals who because of mistaken identities were swept up in counter-terrorism measures.

1.2 RIGHTS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM

The rights of victims of crime have been recognized in a number of soft law instruments and norms at the international level, most notably the 1985 Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power, which, while non-binding, recommends the adoption of measures to address matters relating to access to justice and fair treatment, restitution, compensation and assistance for victims of crime, including terrorism.

States can aid the swift physical and psychological recovery of victims of terrorism by ensuring there are robust mechanisms in place to support such recovery. The following is not an exhaustive list of the key support mechanisms to which victims are entitled (which have been addressed comprehensively in other publications),³⁷ but the mechanisms listed are among the most pertinent ones and have been routinely highlighted as areas of concern in the Victims' Voices experience:

Emergency treatment and care

The Global Counterterrorism Forum Madrid Memorandum on Good Practices for Assistance to Victims of Terrorism Immediately after the Attack and in Criminal Proceedings recognizes the importance of immediate and adequate care for victims of terrorism in the direct aftermath of an attack:

Prompt and efficient assistance and support to terrorism victims from the moment of the attack through normalization and beyond can have a positive effect on victims' mental health and ability to cope.³⁸

Good practices 4 to 8 of the Madrid Memorandum are particularly important recommendations regarding preparations in the immediate aftermath of a terrorist attack:

Good practice 4 Develop a multidisciplinary crisis response team that includes victim-assistance professionals

³⁵ A/HRC/20/14, para. 16. See also Rianne Letschert, Ines Staiger and Antony Pemberton, eds., *Assisting Victims of Terrorism: Towards a European Standard of Justice* (London, Springer, 2009).

³⁶ Among others, see Schmid, "Strengthening the role of victims". These categories are deserving of more attention, but they fall outside the scope of this publication. Thus far, all the victims involved in the Victims' Voices initiative have been either direct or secondary victims of terrorism.

³⁷ See, among others, UNODC, *The Criminal Justice Response to Support Victims*; Letschert, Staiger and Pemberton, *Assisting Victims of Terrorism*; and Lynch and Argomaniz, eds., *Victims of Terrorism*.

³⁸ Global Counter-Terrorism Forum, Madrid Memorandum on Good Practices for Assistance to Victims, p. 1 (see footnote 6).

Good practice 5	Develop a victim list containing identity and contact information
Good practice 6	Protect victims' privacy and confidentiality
Good practice 7	Establish accessible crisis services
Good practice 8	Provide information about and support in dealing with the media ³⁹

Beyond these, legislatively implementing an appropriate minimum standard for victims' emergency services, including prompt medical attention, is an important measure for the benefit of potential future victims. For victims of terrorism, receiving prompt medical attention – payment of the costs of which should be guaranteed by the State – is a vital matter. Delayed medical treatment, particularly because of complicated administrative processes involved in hospital admissions or advance guarantees of payment for treatment, can have fatal consequences. In some jurisdictions where there is no legislative provision for emergency medical services, cases have been reported of victims being denied medical treatment at hospitals until a family member showed up to serve as guarantor. Public announcements by the relevant authorities that the State will cover emergency medical costs thus become necessary, but such a response is often ad hoc and may be inconsistent across administrations, with grave implications for victims' recovery.

Even when legislation for emergency medical care is in place, it is important that an authorized State body publicly declare an incident to be an act of terrorism in a timely manner, so as to avoid any confusion during emergency situations.

Legal status

Timely declaration of an act of terrorism and recognition of the victims – ideally through a system of registration – is relevant for immediate access to emergency medical treatment. A register helps to facilitate measures favouring victims' rights to longer-term medical and psychosocial support, and to any potential entitlement to restitution or financial compensation. Early recognition of the legal status of victims can help to reinforce their role as possible key witnesses and stakeholders in terrorism-related cases in the criminal justice and counter-terrorism frameworks.

Medical support in the medium to long term

Victims of terrorism often suffer multiple and complicated physical injuries as a result of high-impact blasts, and many continue to experience medical complications years after an attack. States can support victims' timely recovery beyond the immediate aftermath of an attack and alleviate their financial burdens by providing adequate medical coverage in the event their personal insurance policies do not.⁴⁰

Psychosocial support in the medium to long term

Victims of terrorism are often also confronted with psychosocial challenges that may take many years to overcome or rectify. Accordingly, States should have structures in place to provide adequate support for victims relating to their psychosocial needs.

Restitution and compensation

Reparations through the criminal justice process in terrorism-related cases are notoriously difficult to obtain. In contexts where compensation is provided only at the close of lengthy criminal proceedings,

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 3–6.

⁴⁰ A/HRC/20/14, para. 58.

victims often have to wait for years, without guarantee, especially in cases where the perpetrators were killed in their own attacks, are difficult to identify or have become fugitives. Where possible, it is recommended that States should allow compensation to victims independently from the results of any criminal or civil proceedings.⁴¹

Freedom of association and expression

Non-governmental organizations representing victims of terrorism play an important role in promoting their interests and needs. Whether such organizations are victims' groups or other relevant civil society groups concerned with victims' needs and legal justice, they have a right to freedom of association and expression. These include speaking out against terrorist perpetrators and their supporters, as well as expressing criticism of specific public policies or governing authorities.⁴² It is important that such organizations be able to operate without undue pressure and receive State protection from any unlawful interference or intimidation.⁴³

⁴¹ UNODC, *Good Practices in Supporting Victims of Terrorism*, para. 194.

⁴² A/HRC/20/14, para. 47.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, para. 48; and Orla Lynch and others, "Best practice recommendations for supporting victims of terrorism", in *Victims of Terrorism*, Lynch and Argomaniz, eds., pp. 153.

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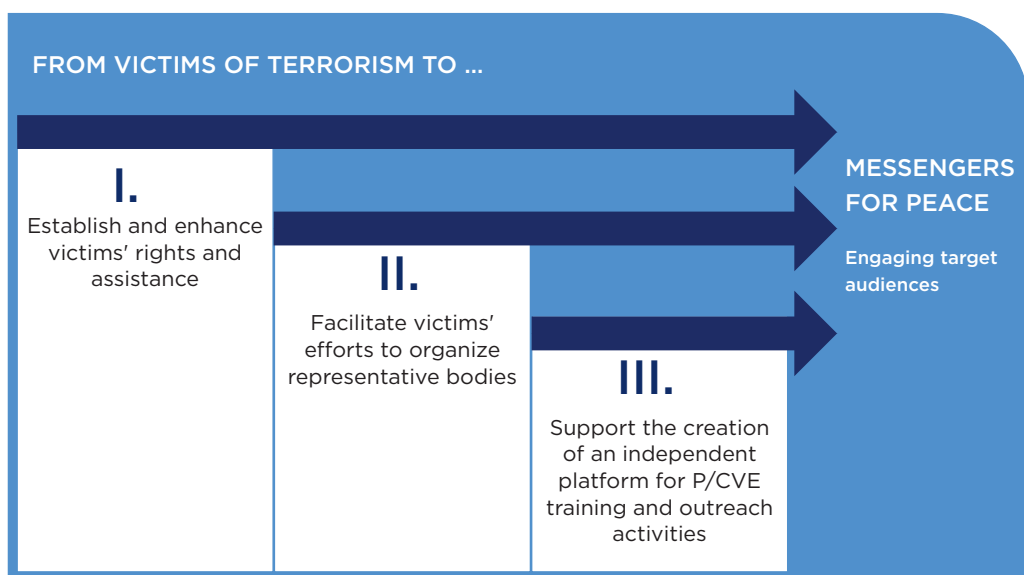


CHAPTER II. A THREE-PRONGED VICTIM-CENTRIC STRATEGIC APPROACH

Since 2013, on the basis of an extensive inception study and subsequent pilot outreach activities in the province of Central Java, Indonesia, the Victims' Voices initiative has been working with local victims of terrorism who are ready and willing to actively share their stories and engage directly with target audiences across the country. These victims, having credibility in speaking out against violence in ways relevant to the specific regional context, contribute to the strengthening of peace in local communities by effectively helping to showcase the destructive impact of terrorism and undermining justifications commonly employed in support of such acts. The aim is to reduce the appeal of pro-violence narratives and reduce support in society for terrorist groups and their activities.

Drawing from the Victims' Voices experience, a three-pronged strategic approach highlights the general process that States could either directly help set up in terms of the overarching architecture, or lend support to where needed in the different areas of focus, as illustrated in figure I.

Figure I. The three-pronged strategic approach to engage victims of terrorism as messengers for peace



In general, States can help to:

- (a) Establish and enhance the rights of victims of terrorism and long-term assistance to them;
- (b) Facilitate victims' organization of representative bodies at the grass-roots level in accordance with how they feel they can best represent their own interests and come together as peers;
- (c) Support the creation of an independent platform for victim-centric P/CVE-related training and outreach activities.

Each of the prongs addresses one of the different sets of actions that need to be taken in broad sequential fashion before the victims who are ready and willing can assume an effective role as messengers for peace.

The eventual alignment of these three prongs leads towards victims' structural inclusion in P/CVE efforts. It is worth noting that the three prongs are inextricably interconnected and that activities falling under each heading, because of limitations on capacity, resources and time, may be planned to run concurrently, or consecutively with programmes that overlap. As depicted by the arrows in figure I that represent progression towards the goal, there are areas where activities of the different prongs may converge. The progress arrows get shorter as the rights of victims are enhanced and strengthened, victims become better organized and an independent platform exists for victims to engage directly with target audiences.

There is a general sequence and hierarchy in terms of actions to be undertaken, that is, those of the first prong ideally have to be addressed before those of the second or the third (e.g., improving procedures to recognize who are victims of terrorism to be accorded the necessary rights has to come before facilitating the setting up of an advocacy group seeking compensation). Enhancing victims' rights will benefit all victims, which can be regarded as a higher priority than representative organizational activities, as the latter is something that not all victims may be willing or able to become a part of at the same time, or at all. In the same vein, not all victims who become active in representative organizational activities will eventually consider becoming active messengers for peace. In fact, as made evident in the experience of Victims' Voices, most of the victims who have chosen to assume the role of peace messengers have been those (a) whose urgent needs were met early, (b) who felt the support of a community of peers and (c) who felt encouraged and reassured about sharing their stories with fellow citizens, and thereafter felt empowered enough by the experience to want to continue doing so. Notwithstanding the hierarchy of actions, it is worth noting that the later prongs feed into the earlier ones as well: for example, victims' groups can more effectively advocate for improved victims' rights than individuals can, especially when supported by the independent platform foreseen in the third prong. The three prongs correspond to the three strategic pathways set out below.

2.1 STRATEGIC PATHWAY I: ESTABLISH AND ENHANCE THE RIGHTS OF AND ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF TERRORISM

Victims of terrorism cannot be expected to consider a role in P/CVE when they have yet to move past the trauma they experienced.

Existing national legislation may make specific provisions for the rights of victims of terrorism, but access to such rights may not always be straightforward. Regulatory mechanisms to render support that victims need, especially in the long term, may be patchy or non-existent. Even determining exactly to whom such rights should be accorded remains a persistent challenge for many States today, because, as there is no single universal definition of "terrorism", it follows that there is no single definition of its victims. Beyond that, what may be recognized as prevailing rights of victims in one State may not

correspond to what exists for victims in another State. Periodic reviews of current legislation and administrative processes relating to victims' matters are therefore necessary in order for States to update their policies and enhance their services.

Different government departments may have different kinds of victim-related matters within their respective purviews, and while specifically designated offices can mean specialized services for victims, enhancing coordination between them brings the added benefit of a more streamlined process. To that end, an interdepartmental working group comprising relevant stakeholders from the different levels of State administration that meet regularly can ensure greater awareness of services for victims across the board and garner a better understanding of where possible gaps could be addressed. In some contexts, a clearly appointed State agency to lead the charge for victims' affairs may be a way forward, not only to coordinate matters within the bureaucracy but also to engage with civil society organizations working on victims' issues, such as victims' rights and rule-of-law advocacy. In either case, building in forward-looking regulations that can address issues faced by victims of not only past but also future terrorist acts is important, particularly in view of the unpredictability of new attacks and their scale.

Key questions to ask:

- How are victims of terrorism defined?
- How many victims of terrorism are present in the jurisdiction?
- Which legal rights, if any, have been granted to them?
- What additional support might they need?
- What are the practical challenges and bureaucratic bottlenecks associated with implementing such legislation; what are the procedural requirements for victims to gain access to their rights (information on legal proceedings, claim compensation, etc.)?
- How can these processes be further streamlined?
- Are there gaps in the legislation and/or regulations that might result in victims not being able to secure their rights?
- What concrete measures can be taken to address those gaps?

It is useful to draw upon existing work in this field when reviewing and enhancing victims' rights.⁴⁴ Ideally, victims as individuals and/or through their representative bodies (see strategic pathway II) should be actively involved in the periodic review process to provide feedback, as well as receive reassurance that support is forthcoming.

Long-term care and assistance in resuming disrupted livelihoods is another area of concern for many victims; the full extent of this need is not usually apparent until many years down the road. Public-private cooperation specific to victims' welfare is an area that can be explored to see where mutual interests intersect and align with the needs of employees who fall victim to terrorism. States, for example, can provide incentives to private businesses to retain such employees even when company policies might dictate otherwise. Victims who can no longer function in their former roles because of permanent disability or psychological distress should be given access to public services when they are ready to find suitable

⁴⁴For example, UNODC, *The Criminal Justice Response to Support Victims*; UNODC, *Good Practices in Supporting Victims of Terrorism*; A/HRC/20/14; General Assembly resolutions 20/288 and 66/282; and Global Counter-Terrorism Forum, Madrid Memorandum on Good Practices for Assistance to Victims of Terrorism.

re-employment for themselves and/or for immediate family members who might not have been active participants in the workforce before but now need to financially support the family.

Reparations in the form of restitution and compensation resulting from criminal justice proceedings in terrorism-related cases are often extremely difficult to obtain and take a very long time. States can consider special ad hoc measures leading to more structural legislative changes, where necessary, to ensure that the rights and needs of victims are met in a timely manner. Financial compensation or other special allowances, such as State-sponsored pensions and disability livelihood insurance, can help to support victims in the long term. Other possible approaches, including one identified by the Special Rapporteur, involve legislative prohibitions on insurance companies whose policies exclude coverage for damage, death, injury or other losses resulting from terrorist acts.⁴⁵ Another possible approach, already implemented in France, for example, is the imposition of levies on insurance policies, although this might be less effective in markets with low insurance penetration.

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PATHWAY I

- (a) Undertake periodic reviews of legislation and regulatory processes;
- (b) Identify a lead State agency to head coordination efforts across government services;
- (c) Make preparations for the development of victim support frameworks even in the absence of recent attacks;
- (d) Incorporate internationally identified good practices into victim support frameworks;
- (e) Improve services for long-term care, including assistance for return to work and special forms of financial aid; and
- (f) Special ad hoc measures to address gaps where necessary .

2.2 STRATEGIC PATHWAY II: FACILITATE VICTIMS' EFFORTS TO ORGANIZE REPRESENTATIVE BODIES

Victims' representative organizations can best communicate victims' needs and act on behalf of their interests.⁴⁶ As a collective, victims have stronger political sway to promote the timely fulfilment of their rights; thus, strategic pathway II feeds into strategic pathway I.

States can promote these aspirations for self-representation by facilitating the establishment of such bodies, including by providing assistance regarding registration requirements. Representative victims' organizations can take various forms (e.g., non-profit, foundation, association, club) and serve different functions (e.g., advocacy, charity, peer support, remembrance, fact-finding). They may be made up of victims of specific attack incidents (e.g., 11 September 2001, London attacks, Bali bombings) or organized around identities (e.g., mothers, widows, amputees). Further State support can include technical and legal advice on organizing and fundraising, matchmaking between victims' organizations and

⁴⁵ A/HRC/20/14.

⁴⁶ A/HRC/20/14, paras. 46–48. See also Bruce Hoffman and Anna-Britt Kasupski, *The Victims of Terrorism: An Assessment of Their Influence and Growing Role in Policy, Legislation, and the Private Sector* (Santa Monica, California, RAND Corporation, 2007).

philanthropic institutions to physically host secretariats or for the provision of secretarial or support staff and other logistical support (e.g., information technology).

Where public funding exists, it should be made available to all such organizations. There should be no hierarchy among the different victims' groups, and none should face any unfair discrimination. All victims deserve to have their rights respected and to have equal access to available public resources and services.

Being part of representative bodies helps victims to come together as peers, form support systems and achieve a sense of community. However, while it may be important for victims to carve out a space in public life, they should not be expected, or feel pressured, to participate.⁴⁷ For those who choose not to, benefits from the State should still be available to them. States have to ensure that no victim slips through the bureaucratic cracks. States have to further ensure that victims secure the right to be protected from those with intent to do them harm because of their public activities, including when they speak out against terrorist groups and their supporters.

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PATHWAY II

- (a) Support desires for self-representation by facilitating the process through technical and logistical support;
- (b) Disburse available public funding to all victims' organizations without discrimination;
- (c) Ensure that victims who choose not to become part of representative associations are extended the same benefits as those who do;
- (d) Protect victims from undue pressures and attempts to harm or intimidate them coming from any quarter.

2.3 STRATEGIC PATHWAY III: SUPPORT THE CREATION OF AN INDEPENDENT PLATFORM FOR TRAINING AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES RELATED TO PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Victims of terrorism can play a meaningful role in the sphere of alternative narratives and counter narratives. Alternative narratives offer a more positive worldview than that in which violence is perceived as a necessity, and counternarratives delegitimize commonly used arguments to justify terrorism. These narratives are ultimately aimed at stemming potential recruitment into violent groups and curbing support in society for violent extremist narratives and the individuals who espouse them.

Efforts to promote such narratives have been numerous and varied, and they are largely focused on gathering credible voices within communities to speak out against extremist and terrorist violence.⁴⁸ These are the voices of, among others, respected community leaders, religious figures and even former perpetrators of violence, each bringing his or her own perspective, lived reality and therefore relatability to

⁴⁷ See Lynch and others, "Best practice recommendations", in *Victims of Terrorism*, Lynch and Argomaniz, eds., pp. 153.

⁴⁸ See Tom Parker, "Redressing the balance: how human rights defenders can use victim narratives to confront the violence of armed groups", *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 33, No. 4 (November 2011).

specific target audiences. Victims of terrorism have been increasingly recognized as possessing a similar degree of credibility in condemning the violence they have suffered.

The use of “credible” individuals to effect positive change in others is neither novel nor unique to P/CVE. It has long been a practice in crime prevention and prison rehabilitation, as is the concept of “victim awareness” and the eliciting of empathy to foster a sense of a common understanding.⁴⁹ However, transferring the experience to a P/CVE context is not a straightforward matter, because terrorism is a complex phenomenon in which the main targets are not the direct targets and the act of violence is itself the message; and these characteristics have implications for determining appropriate responses.

PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM: PRACTICAL CHALLENGES IN THE FIELD

Many factors can contribute to violent extremism. An individual’s eventual turn to violence is often the result of a complex interaction of personal (e.g., personality, psychology), circumstantial (e.g., family, social circle, physical proximity to violence) and structural (e.g., weak governance, socioeconomic marginalization) factors. The abundance of dynamic variables makes it challenging to explain why some people become violent extremists while most do not, and to pinpoint how an intervention sometimes works in turning someone away from violence. Causality is difficult to show, as there is no control group for comparison, and “proving a negative” (i.e., showing that violence was prevented) can be problematic, since there is no linear progression between expressed sentiments and actual actions (i.e., pro-violence beliefs do not necessarily lead to violent behaviours).

In general, P/CVE efforts are too often focused on changing individual “bad” behaviour at the expense of addressing more of the structural problems in society that drive individuals to turn to violence in the first place. In addition, such efforts have to always be specific to the context, which makes replicability in different places, as well as comparisons, difficult. The securitized and sensitive nature of the topic makes gathering reliable data an even bigger challenge. There are also genuine security concerns, making access to first-hand information severely limited, and when such access does exist, there are numerous ethical considerations to bear in mind.

In developing alternative narratives or counternarratives, there are also specific pitfalls. Identifying the right target audience is a delicate endeavour; the audience must not be stigmatized, and the messengers have to possess a specific credibility to be able to connect with the audience, especially in discussions involving loaded terms such as “extremists” and “radicals”. Meaningfully measuring the impact of interactions is difficult, as the respondents may not be fully open in their assessments because of the sensitivities involved.

These challenges are, nevertheless, not insurmountable or unique to P/CVE. Having in-depth knowledge of context is in most cases of chief importance in order to understand what kinds of interventions, if any, could be feasible. Developing strong local partnerships is necessary for implementation, along with careful planning and project design that includes clearly defined metrics to measure impact. Evaluation of impact and processes is important to understand whether an approach works, and to mitigate risks and negative consequences.

⁴⁹ See Ricarda Lummer and Otmar Hagemann, “Victim empathy within prison walls: experiences from pilot projects in Schleswig-Holstein”, *Ljetopis znanstveni članak*, vol. 22, No. 1 (2015); and Jacky Burrows, “Victim awareness: re-examining a probation fundamental”, *Probation Journal*, vol. 60, No. 4 (December 2013).

For that reason, a neutral platform organization which allows for victims of terrorism to participate in P/CVE initiatives and let their stories be heard without appearing to promote a government agenda is a way forward. A direct government hand in community-oriented outreach has been widely noted to have very limited appeal, as it takes away the “authenticity” of the endeavour.⁵⁰ It can even be counterproductive, because where alternative narratives and counternarratives are most needed (i.e. among the target audience), they would be met with disregard and suspicion, or even outright hostility. Furthermore, the asymmetrical nature of the vertical relationship between the State and victims poses possible ethical and practical risks. When governments mobilize victims in P/CVE activities directly under their banners, victims may feel pressured into participation, as that same government is responsible for the fulfilment of their rights. It is worth noting, too, that not all victims may be willing to work with governments in the first place, either because their expectations of help have not been met or because they may disagree on policies or politics.

Depending on context, the platform organization can be in the form of a wholly new entity or an existing grass-roots one, whether already experienced in P/CVE specifically or in other kinds of community outreach programmes, or a dedicated victims-led group. It is not advisable for a victims’ representative body, whether new or existing (as envisioned in strategic pathway II), to either take on or be tasked with this new function. Not only could this invite political discord over the diversion of limited resources to an endeavour not all members may want to become a part of, but it could also pose security risks for the victims’ group as a whole.

The platform provides credible voices with the proper tools and resources, including preparatory training, that they will need for engagement, as well as facilitators and victim peer support. Organized around victims’ perspectives and sensitivities, the focus is on the victims’ stories, in their own words. Every story is different, and it is crucial to keep in mind that each narration is deeply personal, regardless of how many times it is shared. Training from the platform comes in the form of guidance on public speaking and visual aids. It is important that victims be aware of and agree with the specific aims and objectives of the outreach activities from the outset, to help them frame their key messages in their new role as peace messengers.

At any rate, the neutrality of the platform contributes to its credibility among the victims and potential target audiences alike. Having strong local partners on board – be they seasoned community organizers, subject matter experts or leading figures of a grass-roots movement, an institution or a house of worship – is necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the initiative. Local partnerships build a sense of ownership over the initiative. When local communities feel they are part of a constructive solution to a problem they live with – in this case, violent extremism or terrorism – initiatives are more sustainable.⁵¹

The platform’s neutrality also means that different credible voices can come together in a safe space. Depending on feasibility and context, the platform may buttress the victim-centric approach with other credible messengers from the community. Should the extremist violence in question be religiously inspired, the inclusion of a religious figure who can authoritatively help to respond to any critical or hostile questions from the target audiences, such as by providing contextual interpretations of relevant religious teachings against the use of violence, can lend support to victims’ take on injustice. Alternatively,

⁵⁰ See Patrick Belanger and Susan Szmania, “The paradox of source credibility in Canadian and U.S. domestic counterterrorism communications”, *International Journal of Communication*, (2018); Alex P. Schmid, “Al-Qaeda’s ‘Single narrative’ and attempts to develop counternarratives: the state of knowledge” (The Hague, International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2014).

⁵¹ See Lisa Schirch and Deborah Mancini-Griffoli, eds., *Local Ownership in Security: Case Studies of Peacebuilding Approaches* (The Hague, Alliance for Peacebuilding, Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, 2015), pp. 5–30.

former perpetrators of violence who no longer support the use of violence can share their regrets over the harm they caused by their past actions.

A range of possible outreach activities can thereafter be jointly considered by the platform and its credible messengers. These could include outreach visits to schools, institutes of higher learning or youth centres, where there may be individuals at risk of recruitment into violent extremist and terrorist groups. Where relevant, outreach events with community religious leaders may be organized to connect the credible messengers with various congregations to show how no act of violence could be justified on religious grounds. They can also involve journalists to convey how news coverage of terrorism events could focus at least as much on victims' stories as the perpetrators' motivations and rhetoric and create greater awareness of victims' issues, even when their attacks are no longer current news. Another outreach possibility, if properly planned and sensitively handled, is direct engagement with terrorist inmates, which should be independent from, but in support of, other prison-run rehabilitation programmes.

In all of the above-mentioned outreach possibilities, coordination with the relevant State departments and agencies remains important, as is coordination with the participating victims as partners. Relevant input from different components ensures that there is a constant feedback loop, which is particularly helpful when it comes to protecting the welfare of the victims.

The process of bringing different elements together into one platform is not without its challenges, as illustrated by the Victims' Voices experience (see chapter III). It is a highly process-driven enterprise, but with a demonstrable positive impact, which is achievable provided that the safety and well-being of victims remain the primary considerations throughout and that there is strong support from local partners, whether victims' groups or those who are part of the platform. Support from the relevant State agencies (e.g., victim protection agency, health ministry, education ministry, corrections department) is necessary, too. With all the different elements working in concert as partners in the process, developing a victim-centric P/CVE approach can lead to the structured involvement of victims of terrorism in community outreach.

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PATHWAY III

- (a) Victims' involvement in P/CVE activities is in the form of specific alternative narratives or counternarratives;
- (b) There is a need for an independent platform through which victims can engage directly with target audiences as peace messengers with credibility;
- (c) The platform's neutrality contributes to its credibility in the eyes of the local partners, stakeholders and target audiences alike;
- (d) Coordination with victims' organizations and the relevant authorities is important in order to have a feedback loop;
- (e) The independent platform may incorporate other credible voices in support of the victims' narratives;
- (f) Preparatory training is necessary before victims (and possibly other credible messengers) participate in outreach activities with target audiences.

3



CHAPTER III. THEORY IN PRACTICE: VICTIMS' VOICES INITIATIVE

The Victims' Voices initiative started with an inception study in Indonesia in July 2012 to understand the lie of the land in regard to victims of terrorism and their public activities. At the time, there were several different victims' groups, mostly organized around major terrorist incidents.⁵² While their respective organizational strengths varied, most of the victims' activities revolved around peer support and the attainment of victims' rights. Victims came forward to share their stories with the wider community only in sporadic, ad hoc fashion; this usually occurred during commemorative ceremonies or in reaction to terrorism-related news.

What followed was a victim-led idea to bring the stories of Indonesian victims of terrorism to fellow citizens directly, in recognition of the importance of credibility and relatability, as well as the valued local custom of face-to-face personal interactions. Over the last six years, the approach demonstrates that when victims are adequately prepared to bring their stories in constructive fashion directly to a broad audience through a neutral platform that can provide for victims' continued participation in a structured and sustainable manner, there can be a positive impact. In this case, the impact is measured in terms of changing attitudes (of the target audience) towards the use of violence.

This chapter describes the organic growth of the Victims' Voices initiative, laying out the elemental phases and processes that took place from the outset. Policymakers and practitioners interested in supporting the creation of new structures, or the expansion of existing structures into a similar victim-centric P/CVE endeavour, may find the following sections useful when considering or designing an appropriate approach for their specific context. Most of the activities detailed below form part of strategic pathway III, that is, they have to do with the setting up of the independent platform and subsequent efforts to actualize victim-centric outreach activities in the field.

Broadly, the phases of development of the Victims' Voices initiative were:

- Preliminary scoping leading to a strategic approach
- Pilot test
- Creation of an independent platform for victims' voices
- Design, implementation and evaluation of victim-centric outreach activities

⁵² The first and second Bali attacks, of 2002 and 2005; the 2003 JW Marriott bomb attack in Jakarta; and the 2004 Australian Embassy bomb attack.

3.1 PRELIMINARY SCOPING RESULTING IN A STRATEGIC APPROACH

As circumstances are different everywhere, it is important for Member States to first gauge the feasibility of a similar victim-centric initiative in their respective contexts. An inception study provides valuable insights into local sociopolitical dynamics, including victims' movements and existing P/CVE programmes, which can inform the design of an effective strategic approach. Such scoping may be best undertaken by practitioners with experience in the field, who should seek input from a wide range of stakeholders in government, civil society and academia.

Soliciting support and establishing objectives

Support from the relevant stakeholders from both the public and civil sectors is necessary for different reasons. Government support can help to ensure ease of access to targeted outreach locations and, in some cases, ensure security. Involving local partners from the grass roots in the process from the beginning helps the initiative to grow organically, thereby fostering its sustainability and effectiveness. The aims of the initiative have to be clearly shared with all stakeholders to be able to garner a good understanding of the level of interest and, accordingly, set out acceptable objectives towards the agreed P/CVE purpose. The different parties may well have different ultimate goals, but the processes should lead to a general strengthening of victims' rights, as well as of the relevant agencies rendering services to victims.

Working backwards from the stated intention to establish an independent platform for a victim-centric approach to P/CVE, the short-term goals might include: assisting victims of terrorism in gaining better access to their rights where necessary, for example, in respect of medical, psychological and financial claims (in line with strategic pathway I); facilitating meaningful dialogue between the government and victims as individuals and/or their representative bodies (in line with strategic pathway II); providing victims who are ready and willing with a neutral sounding board to potentially connect with target audiences in constructive fashion with their stories (in line with strategic pathway III); and the long-term goals might include: creating the structures and environment for a sustainable victim-centric initiative aimed at preventing the proliferation of violent extremist narratives among target audiences and countering violent extremism (in line with strategic pathway III); increasing awareness, especially among policy-makers, of the role victims of terrorism can play in P/CVE; enhancing mechanisms to support victims of terrorism (in line with strategic pathway I).

At the outset of the Victims' Voices inception study in Indonesia, local stakeholders were invited to provide input that would help position the initiative and align it with current activities and actors in the field. To this end, a questionnaire was disseminated to a wide range of stakeholders in the government, civil society, including religious groups, and academia, who were subsequently interviewed to solicit their feedback on the proposed strategy and activities, and on how best to approach this matter in the Indonesian context.

Baseline needs assessment and analysis

With the objectives and goals established, a needs assessment is necessary to understand the wider socio-political environment in which the initiative will take place. The assessment can be carried out through desk and field research that comprises formal and informal discussions and interviews with the relevant stakeholders, organizations and subject matter experts.

The assessment can help to determine whether and how a victim-centric initiative could become viable in the context, and if so, which other societal elements could help to support such an approach. Periodic reviews thereafter are recommended to account for evolving environmental dynamics.

In the Indonesian context, the needs assessment and analysis included the following:

- Analysis of contemporary history in the post-Suharto era, with a focus on domestic and transnational terrorism incidents and other associated extremist violence, including available information on victims both local and foreign
- Analysis of government responses to terrorism at the local, regional and national levels, including the approach to victims in the immediate aftermath of terrorist attacks and thereafter
- Review of existing or planned public activities involving victims of terrorism in civil society or government-led programmes

Thereafter, it was decided to configure a platform where the moral credibility of the victims would be bolstered by other credible messengers to whom target audiences could further relate, namely, community religious figures and former perpetrators of extremist violence. Presenting the target audiences with a combination of positive alternative narratives and counternarratives – the former consisting of inspiring stories of the survival, perseverance and forgiveness of the victims, and the latter the stories of regret and renunciation of violence of the former perpetrators – serves to show a constructive way forward while concurrently refuting commonly used arguments in support of terrorist violence. The community religious figures help to provide the necessary scriptural evidence, where needed, in support of peace and against violence from a sound theological basis. The main aim of the approach is to showcase the destructive consequences of terrorist violence for the lives of fellow Indonesians while critically challenging the target audiences regarding the utility of violence and the commission of an act of injustice against a fellow citizen, regardless of grievances, real or perceived.

3.2 PILOT TEST

The strategic approach identified as most appropriate for the local conditions should ideally be tested in a pilot phase, to corroborate the initial working assumptions regarding the effectiveness of the messengers and the message. A pilot test may be specifically tailored to the immediate locale, but the key elements of the approach remain the same: the credibility of the messengers, the message to be conveyed, the target audience to be engaged and the neutrality of the platform through which direct interactions are facilitated. These are the elements upon which the pilot should be evaluated.

For the pilot to take place, ample preparation is required. Coordination with the relevant local authorities is a first step towards obtaining the necessary or recommended permission. Initial preparations are needed for the first group of interested victims to participate in the pilot outreach activities. Beyond guidance on public speaking, the aim of the preparations is to let victims know what to expect in the field. Should the context allow for other credible voices to share the stage during the pilot test, they should also receive preparation. Thereafter, a facilitated introductory meeting between the victims and the other credible voices should be undertaken, before which all the participants should already be aware of, and in agreement with, the objectives of the victim-centric approach. In the final lead-up to the pilot outreach, a joint pre-outreach preparatory training event will help to build rapport, solidify key messages and iron out any remaining issues. Any further continuance of the initiative should be based on the results from the pilot.

In October 2013, a community outreach pilot was developed to test the viability of the Victims' Voices approach in the Indonesian context, based on the results of the inception study. To that end, the first victims who were ready and willing were invited to a special training activity that sufficiently prepared them to tell their stories alongside former perpetrators who regretted their past actions. The outreach location was a district in Central Java where terrorism-related activities, including recruitment, had been reported, and the target audience was made up of youths from the area. The engagements were limited to small groups (about 50 people per session) and the core message of the victims revolved around the destructive repercussions of terrorist violence and how they persevered despite it all. The former perpetrators spoke of regret and remorse for having been part of operations, or for having supported acts of violence, that brought such suffering to the victims. The platform facilitators had ample experience in community engagements; one of them had Islamic-scholarship credentials and the other was an activist for vulnerable groups in society. At each step of the way – from the initial preparations to the outreach – a victim peer assessed and “tested” the process to ensure that the needs and sensitivities of the participating victims were prioritized. The pilot was conducted with the support of the relevant authorities, including the education ministry, district-level community groups and victims' organizations.

3.3 CREATING AN INDEPENDENT PLATFORM ORGANIZATION FOR VICTIMS' VOICES

Identifying a platform model

Central to the effectiveness of this victim-centric P/CVE initiative is the neutral platform organization that credible voices can utilize to engage target audiences. The platform's independence allows it to build its credibility among target audiences that are typically wary of government-led initiatives, and to organize highly focused programmes around credible community voices to increase the likelihood of positive impact. Depending on the context, the platform can take the form of legal entity (e.g., association, foundation, club) that best serves its purposes.

The platform provides the necessary tools and resources, including preparatory training, that victims will need for engagement. The platform also ensures the availability of experienced facilitators and victim peer support that prioritizes the victims' perspective and sensitivities. For States that are considering supporting the establishment of such a platform organization, it is important that sufficient resources be sought or reserved for the endeavour, to ensure sustainable operations.

In the case of Indonesia, a nascent civil society organization concerned with vulnerable groups in society was identified as the platform's key implementing partner. Formally set up as a foundation in December 2013, it is populated by a group of well-established Indonesian scholars and grass-roots figures. The foundation has the support of victims of different major terrorist incidents, the Indonesian authorities and several other relevant organizations and stakeholders with competence over victims' matters. The platform is independent from the government and existing organizations representing victims. The arrangement enables cooperation among a highly diverse groups of individuals.

Activities and scope of work

Activities of the platform need to be clearly outlined. While the victim-centric initiative revolves around connecting credible messengers with target audiences in outreach activities, it is recognized that victims' concerns and needs have to be sufficiently addressed. Where appropriate, and to the extent possible, the platform can assist victims in a systematic manner. Such assistance usually comes in the form of helping victims to gain access to rights that have yet to be fulfilled. In doing so, the platform also extends assistance to the State by helping to communicate and recommend, on behalf of the victims, concrete measures that could be taken to boost victims' welfare.

Supporting victims

- At the organizational level, the platform can also contribute to the welfare of victims as individuals or as a group. Contributions can take the form of, for example: Psychological support, guided by a team of professionals (e.g., psychologists, community workers, rehabilitation specialists) to help victims come to terms with what happened to them and deal with continuing everyday challenges; even victims of terrorist incidents of decades ago can suffer lingering painful effects, such as continued grief over the loss of loved ones or permanent disability
- Legal support, guided by legal experts, to help explain to victims existing rights and regulations in the jurisdiction, inform them of national and international instruments and guidelines to gain access to those rights and, where relevant, steer them through bureaucratic procedures, assisted by legal experts and government officials, to ensure optimal access to justice within existing legislative boundaries
- Support for victims' public activities, including commemorative events, victim awareness campaigns and peer support activities

On the basis of feedback from the victims' community in Indonesia, the platform organization has:

- Organized support group sessions with mental health professionals to promote psychological health in small-group settings, as well as individualized sessions for those who need more focused attention
- Assisted victims in their advocacy for a medical guarantee card
- Organized a series of legal clinics, during which victims were informed of existing legislation relevant to them, and gaps in regulations were identified and communicated to the relevant authorities
- Set up a modest bursary and scholarship programme for school-going children of victims of terrorism to help alleviate financial burdens
- Supported victims' annual commemorative ceremonies and other public activities, including peace marches and awareness campaigns

Platform introduction and information-sharing events with the victims' community

The profile, activities, aims and objectives of the platform have to be introduced to the victims' community clearly and coherently from the outset. This is especially important for a new platform in order to build trust, foster support and encourage involvement. Social gatherings in informal settings during

which victims and their family members can seek clarifications, express their personal aspirations and provide feedback are useful.

In the early stages of introducing the initiative, the processes leading to the eventual outreach activities need to be explained clearly, whereas subsequent events can be more focused on updating victims about programme progress. Soliciting and monitoring victims' feedback should remain constant throughout, particularly when organizing and implementing outreach activities. It needs to be emphasized that regardless of whether or not victims decide to participate in P/CVE efforts, the aforementioned supporting activities are extended to all. The benefits of the supporting activities should not be limited to those who decide to utilize the platform to engage with target audiences.

The first social gathering to introduce the platform to Indonesian victims of terrorism was held in early 2013 in Jakarta. Members of different victims' groups from across the country attended. The workshop was organized around the theme of the role victims of terrorism could play to help to build peace in the country, and its overall aim was to introduce the concept and background of the Victims' Voices initiative, solicit input from the local victims' perspective and identify interested individuals for the outreach activities. Direct interactions with the victims and learning first-hand about their concerns and needs led to a better understanding of victims' issues, as well as of the dynamics within the victims' community.

Victims' networking

Keeping up-to-date contact details of victims is useful in order to keep them apprised of the activities of the platform and familiarize them with the functions of the platform and how it can best be utilized to their advantage. As the platform gains traction, the network of victims grows along with it.

Invitations to the wider victims' community for the platform's very first social gathering in Jakarta were made through the representative bodies of the various victims' groups. Thirty-eight victims and their family members attended. Registration of attendees was done at the door; they were free to share their contact details, with the understanding that the information would be kept confidential and used only by the platform for its own purposes (e.g., invitations to relevant events, programme updates, victims' newsletters).

At the close of the gathering, the platform staff members publicly invited the victims to fill in a questionnaire to provide further details of the terrorist incidents they had experienced, as well as any outstanding issues they might still have relating to their needs, or questions they might have about the platform, to explore what kinds of cooperation could be organized and what forms of assistance could be extended. Personal interviews were also conducted. The victims were under no obligation to provide details or agree to the interviews. The standing principle is that victims' stories remain theirs to share, if they so wish, and are not a commodity.

Approaching new victims

The utmost care must be taken in approaching victims of new attacks. Time is important in any recovery process, for wounds to heal and the grieving and trauma processes to run their course, and these processes are, not surprisingly, different from one victim to another. In general, victims of terrorist attacks that took place many years before may be assumed to be more accessible and willing to become part of a

P/CVE initiative than victims of more recent incidents, simply because the former have had a longer time to recover from and process what happened to them. Of course, this is not always the case. A recovery process is not linear, and it does not occur at a constant rate for all victims; neither can all victims be predictably anticipated to emerge fully healed in the end.

Time is an important element in the recovery process, but so is the restoration of a victim's sense of justice and control over the process, to help them move forward. Accordingly, victims of recent attacks, particularly in the chaotic wake of an attack, must be treated with dignity and respect, and their privacy must be respected.

A terrorist attack in the Thamrin area in the heart of Jakarta in January 2016 – about two years after the first Victims' Voices outreach activities rolled out – meant there was a group of new victims needing critical help. From numerous interviews with victims of past terrorist attacks, access to immediate medical attention had been identified as an area of challenge. As part of the platform's crisis response, in coordination with a number of concerned victims of past incidents, hospitals across the city were visited as the attack unfolded, to help ensure that the victims who were conveyed to the hospitals received appropriate and timely medical care. In the days thereafter, the victims were checked on again, and the ones who expressed their agreement were connected with victims of past attacks for peer support.

Subsequent connections between the new victims and the platform were mediated by representatives of victims' groups. It is at the discretion of the victims' groups when the new victims will be invited to any of the general events organized by the platform relating to victims' rights or support. Victims often accept invitations to attend only when they feel ready, and it is usually from other victims that they first hear of the platform's P/CVE efforts. When the new victims receive first-hand information about the platform's P/CVE dimension during the general events, they also learn that participation is purely voluntary. Reflecting the general commitment of the platform to the victim-centric approach, as well as the very human process behind it, it was at least 10 months after the Thamrin attack that the first victims attended a general platform event, and two and a half years after the attack that a Thamrin victim utilized the platform to participate in an outreach activity. As of May 2020, a total of four victims of the Thamrin attack had utilized the platform, all of whom are repeat participants

SECONDARY VICTIMIZATION

Secondary victimization is a well-documented occurrence that affects many victims of crime, including terrorism.⁴ It is crucial that preventive measures be in place to avoid the risk of victims feeling re-victimized as a result of interactions with institutions or individuals they meet in the wake of the attacks they experience. The most relevant possible risks relate to the creation of undue expectations of all victims of terrorism to eventually assume a role as peace messengers, together with everything that such a role may entail, including on-demand sharing of their stories; feeling instrumentalized by political agendas; the possibility of engaging with target audiences that may be indifferent or even hostile towards them; the possibility of engaging or working alongside former terrorists; and feeling pressure to forgive those who did them harm before they are personally ready to.

To prevent any such risks, the victims who become involved must be only those who voluntarily choose to do so. It is important that the victims retain control over how they tell their own stories in their own words. They also need to be adequately prepared for public speaking and have practice being in front of a crowd, including handling media attention. Any potential risks to victims' physical and psychological well-being have to be

made clear from the outset so that they may weigh their options and make informed choices regarding participation. Victims have to be made aware of the procedures and processes, understand the P/CVE nature of the engagements and feel assured that they can stop their participation at any time without judgment or further obligations.

^a See Montada, "Coping with life stress", in *Social Justice in Human Relations*, Steensma and Vermunt, eds. (see footnote 11); Ulrich Orth, "Secondary victimization of crime victims by criminal proceedings", *Social Justice Research*, vol. 15, No. 4 (December 2002); Pemberton and Vanfraechem, "Victims' victimization experiences", in *Victims and Restorative Justice*, Vanfraechem, Bolívar Fernández and Aertsen, eds. (see footnote 11). See also UNODC, *Good Practices in Supporting Victims of Terrorism*, paras. 62–65; and Febe Liagre and Cindy Verleysen, eds., *Preventing Secondary Victimization Policies and Practices*, EUCPN Toolbox Series, No. 7 (Brussels, European Crime Prevention Network, 2016).

3.4 ORGANIZING VICTIM-CENTRIC ACTIVITIES TO PREVENT AND COUNTER VIOLENT EXTREMISM

One of the central objectives of the victim-centric P/CVE outreach activities is to get individuals at risk of recruitment into violent extremist groups to interact directly with victims of terrorism. Through victim awareness and engagements, it is hoped that such individuals realize the devastating repercussions of acts of terrorism first-hand and, with the right facilitation, begin to critically evaluate for themselves the utility of violence as a means to an end.

To come to that point, a series of preparatory exercises have to be undertaken to ensure that the limited platform resources are channelled properly. Determining who the right target audience is and where they are, and deciding which victims are ready to engage and which other credible voices to engage alongside them, are among the key considerations. The foremost priority nevertheless remains the victims, their well-being and their sense of ease with the entire process in the lead-up to, and during, the sharing of their stories. The victims have to always be assured that they can call the process to a halt at any time.

Community outreach activities are at the core of the victim-centric P/CVE activities in Indonesia. Although there has been increasing evidence in recent years of terrorism-related activities facilitated by the Internet, radicalization and recruitment into terrorist groups mostly remains rooted in specific physical geographies and are often carried out through real-world contacts, for example, family members, schoolmates, neighbourhood study groups, etc. Through the Platform, victims of terrorism who are ready and willing are selected, trained and deployed to a selected district or region, together with other credible messengers, to share their stories.

ENGAGING IN P/CVE INITIATIVES: RISKS AND MITIGATION

In most P/CVE engagements, security is of the utmost concern because of the potential for violence. That a particular audience is "targeted" implies that its members may have engaged in violence themselves, may be supportive of violence or may be living among individuals who may match either of those descriptions. There are obvious risks to security for those who come into such environments to speak out against violence. A target audience may be indifferent or even hostile towards victims, which can be damaging for them. Prudence, therefore, is key when deciding on the locations for outreach, balancing the desire for effective impact where it is most needed, on the one hand, with bona fide threats to physical and psychological

well-being, on the other. Good working relations with community partners and coordination with local authorities help to ensure safety.

It is important to keep in mind that victims of terrorism are not involved in P/CVE efforts to debate politics, ideology or theology, but to share their stories and, for those who are ready for it, the virtues of forgiveness. The presence of good facilitators prevents any unnecessary provocation or escalation of possible tensions in that regard. Having victim peers present who have prior experience in outreach activities also helps, especially when they guide less experienced victims through the process and provide peer support, or even step in, in the event a fellow victim, for whatever reason, is not able to continue participating in the outreach activity.

In any P/CVE engagement, it remains important to prevent the target audience from feeling stigmatized, which is counterproductive for open and constructive engagements.

Identifying messengers suited for the context

The Victims' Voices initiative seeks to connect, and facilitate dialogues between, individuals who otherwise do not usually interact in this way. In doing so, it allows individuals, typically from different sides of the terrorism spectrum – perpetrators and supporters of violence, and the victims of violence – to meet. The advantage of a neutral platform is that different voices can come together without appearing to serve anyone else's agenda but their own. The credibility of messengers lies in part with the "authenticity" deriving from the fact that they are there of their own agency and have very personal reasons for wanting to be there. When identifying suitable messengers, experience thus far shows that having a variety of voices that are in support of the victims' perspective only strengthens the approach, as what may be immediately credible or relatable for one person may not be so for others.

Whichever messengers are eventually selected, they have to first undergo preparatory training (see the section on pre-outreach training on page 35).

Victims of terrorism

The victims who are chosen for participation are primarily self-selecting: they are those who are ready and willing. Still, there needs to be a general awareness of the platform, and its activities have to be made clear to the victims from the outset. Word-of-mouth and other forms of recommendation, particularly from victims with experience on the platform, are important.

Victims' organizations may be invited to suggest suitable candidates from among their members. Formal memorandums of understanding between victims' organizations and the platform may be worth considering, as such agreements can facilitate cooperation, build institutional relations and prevent possible misunderstandings.

Wherever possible, selecting victims with ties to the region or area where engagements with target audiences are planned have several advantages: foremost, the audience can relate more easily to victims from a familiar background, which has a knock-on effect on empathy levels. Further, in conveying that they are not "outsiders", the victims help to show that what happened to them could happen to anyone in the room, that terrorist violence is indiscriminate.

Where necessary, especially for victims participating for the first time, an interview will be helpful for exploring personal expectations and aspirations and for determining their readiness by shedding further light on the risks to physical security that could be involved, as well as the risk of secondary victimization.

In certain instances, a psychologist may be invited to give an independent professional assessment of a victim's readiness.

Among the basic selection criteria are:

- General and specific relatability to the target audience
- Willingness and ability to constructively share their stories
- Awareness and understanding that the process may be emotionally heavy, particularly with respect to engaging target audiences that may be sympathetic to violent extremists or working alongside former perpetrators of extremist violence.

The selection process may also take into account other elements, including languages spoken, cultural background, general availability and representation of different victims' groups or terrorism incidents. At every outreach activity, it may be useful to include at least one victim with prior experience on the platform, to promote learning from experience and peer support.

Depending on the region identified for outreach activities, efforts are made to have at least one victim on the platform with some degree of personal ties to the locale (e.g., family origins, alma mater, spoken dialects). In the Indonesian context, for instance, any planned engagements with target audiences in the West Java region would, to the extent possible, include a victim who has ties to the Sundanese culture and language, whereas engagements in Central Java would involve at least one with ties to the Javanese culture and language.

Former perpetrators

In contexts where it may be possible to have former perpetrators as credible messengers on the same platform, it is essential that the messenger be someone who has unequivocally renounced the violent methods he or she once used or supported. The advice of subject matter experts in the field, together with those who are close to the individual, including their peers, prison officers (if they have served time in prison) and social workers (if they have had to report) are important vetting points. Other considerations may be factors, too, such as whether they have fulfilled the punitive measures imposed for their past involvement in or support for violence. Facilitators should also be on hand to continually monitor and assess the individuals, with the well-being of the victims foremost in mind.

Former perpetrators need to understand that they are there in support of the victims' perspective, even in telling stories that are their own as well. It is often the case that when former perpetrators have trained with victims beforehand, they will add a victim's dimension to their personal stories.

Among the basic selection criteria are:

- Having renounced the use of violence and expressed regret over their past actions, as verified by various sources
- General and specific relatability to the target audience
- Willingness and ability to constructively share their stories, in support of the victims' perspective
- Openness to meet, interact and have constructive dialogues with victims of terrorism

Other credible voices

Terrorism is a tactic of violence that has endured through time, employed by different groups across different nationalities and ethno-religious backgrounds to advance varied political causes for the achievement of particular political goals.

Where there may be ideological or theological underpinnings to the tactic, having relevant individuals who can credibly address such dimensions may be something to consider. Depending on context and target audience, individuals of influence in their respective fields may also be invited to share their expert opinions on such matters, in support of the victims' perspective. These could be traditional leaders, religious figures or local figures of repute.

Among the basic selection criteria are:

- Having the relevant scholarly background or long-time experience in the relevant field
- Having a good understanding of the contextual issues affecting a target audience as a group at risk of being recruited into violent groups or that is supportive of violence

Family members of terrorists (either active or deceased/imprisoned) could be a valuable addition to the list of credible messengers in certain contexts, as they can speak out against the violent acts of their relatives from the viewpoint of a perpetrator's own background, effectively eliminating arguments of collective victimhood based on origin or culture.

Identifying a target audience

When planning outreach activities, it is essential to ensure that resources are optimally utilized. A central objective is to get credible voices to engage individuals who are potentially at risk of being recruited into violent extremist groups; otherwise, it is an exercise in futility. Accordingly, a good understanding of the local context is key. Input from subject matter experts is necessary.

It is also important to prevent stigmatization of those to be engaged, as this could be counterproductive. The aim of connecting target audiences directly with victims and other credible messengers is to start a constructive engagement on a neutral platform, and not to turn them away before interactions even begin. Therefore, the framing of the engagement should be acceptable to the local context and considerate of how the initiative is perceived among the target audience.

On the basis of input from subject matter experts and local partners, in the light of contextual dynamics relating to violent extremism and terrorist recruitment trends in Indonesia, identifying the location of the outreach activities has been an important first step. Thereafter, within the relevant geographical area, possible segments of society or groups have been identified that would benefit most from an engagement with victims of terrorism and other relevant credible voices. Among those identified as a principal target audience have been youths between the ages of 14 and 18 years old.

Proper coordination with the relevant authorities is necessary to obtain access to the target audience. Recommendation letters should be obtained from the relevant national and local authorities (e.g., the education ministry in the case of schools) for administrative purposes.

Identifying community partners at the district level

Depending on context, connecting with local partners at the district level may be helpful in getting further locale-specific insights, as well as for working out administrative and logistical matters at that level. Such a partner may itself be a grass-roots organization or it may be an individual with a good name in the community. It is key that the district-level partner has detailed knowledge about the region or communities to be visited, agrees with the aims and objectives of the victim-centric initiative and possesses enough credibility in the local context to approach a target audience without creating antipathy or distrust.

It is worth noting that any cooperation with other organizations needs to take into account the fact that they have their own goals and ambitions; sufficient attention should be given to understanding their objectives and, where possible, finding common ground. Depending on the context, these district-level partners may be the first point of contact for the target audience or with regard to the organizational arrangements prior to gathering the target audience into one space. The holding of regular coordination meetings on expected actions, targets and deadlines between the platform organization and the district-level partner ensures proper and timely organization of the outreach activity.

Pre-outreach training

Prior to engaging with target audiences, it is important that victims be prepared for their role through specialized training that seeks to:

- Build stronger relations between victims
- Build trust between the victims and other credible messengers, if any, utilizing the platform to encourage the formation of genuine relationships where possible
- Familiarize victims with the aims and objectives of the outreach activities and their implementation
- Provide the necessary tools and resources for the eventual engagement with the target audience, with exercises in public speaking and assistance in the preparation of their presentation materials
- Allow victims the space to tell their stories in their own words

The training sessions are small, closed-door events, to encourage direct interaction and the candid sharing of experiences between the victims, especially across different groups and terrorism incidents, and alongside other credible messengers, where available. If there are former perpetrators in the mix, it is important to prevent their presence from becoming overwhelming or intimidating for the participating victims.

Among the considerations to note when organizing such training are the composition of the participants and their respective backgrounds, bearing in mind that familiarity can translate to greater relatability. All participants, particularly the victims, should be made aware that the training may become emotionally heavy at times and that they are not obliged to continue if they feel in any way uncomfortable with the process.

Individuals who have undergone pre-outreach training become part of a ready pool from which the platform can draw in rotating fashion for outreach activities to engage different target audiences across the country.

The Victims' Voices experience in Indonesia features special joint training for victims and former perpetrators. The training is carefully constructed to build trust among the participants, and properly facilitated to prevent any serious conflicts from arising and to manage relations and expectations. The training also includes a good proportion of informal interactions to encourage natural rapport.

Trust is built between victims and former perpetrators. For trust to grow organically within a limited time frame, it is important to have good facilitation that is sensitive to the victims' perspective and plenty of lead time for victims to mentally prepare themselves. Providing ample background information regarding the former perpetrators is also necessary so that the victims can know whom and what to expect. The victims' exercise of agency and full control over when they might want to call the process to a halt is an essential part of the victim-centric approach.

A good facilitator is necessary to guide the training process, assure the participants of the importance and relevance of their stories, encourage genuine relationships to form between them and return to the key messages in favour of peace and against violence. The facilitator should allow participants ample time and opportunity for questions and critical self-reflection. It is the responsibility of the facilitator to intervene if the atmosphere becomes tense or if a situation gets out of hand. The facilitator, however, should not dominate discussions, but allow the participants the chance to communicate naturally among themselves.

An informal atmosphere with ice-breaking activities that allows for humour is always welcomed by the participants, particularly in the light of the solemn nature of the topic. Social activities on the sidelines, for example, a dinner outing or sightseeing, typically after the first day, allow for more relaxed interactions between victims and former perpetrators. The outreach activities they will eventually participate in will consist of real-time, non-scripted interactions between them before the target audience. It has been observed that the more authentic the interactions between victim and perpetrator during the outreach activity, for example, ways of addressing one another or back-and-forth bantering, the greater the level of audience engagement.

FAIR COMPENSATION FOR ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS

Member States supporting victim-centric P/CVE activities may want to consider providing fair compensation for the time and efforts of the individuals who participate in the outreach activities. However, it is important that such activities not become an industry that attracts individuals interested in participation primarily for financial gain. A genuine interest and desire to help to promote peace and prevent future acts of terrorism should be the participant's main motivation. Fair compensation should therefore be a reasonable reflection of a participant's commitment of a certain number of days to the outreach activities, including the training, which is time they otherwise could have spent at their own jobs or with their families; as well as the non-commercial and public-spirited nature of the initiative. Such compensation should be on top of any costs borne for participating, such as transportation and out-of-town accommodation.

Organizing outreach activities

It is impossible to provide a precise model for a globally applicable outreach event that will have immediate and lasting effects on a community. The focus, shape and content of outreach activities will differ in each context, based on the results of the aforementioned needs assessment, among other things. However, it is possible to identify some recommended good practices and lessons learned from the ongoing Victims' Voices initiative.

Depending on context, there are benefits to securing the necessary permission of the relevant authorities at as local a level as possible before approaching target audiences. New or unfamiliar initiatives may be viewed by local communities with suspicion. Accordingly, being able to proactively show that the activities have a stamp of approval from trusted local authorities will help to increase confidence and the acceptability of the platform and the planned engagements.

Engagements with target audiences should take place in a safe space, to be able to discuss matters that are sensitive and, to a large extent, securitized. Small groups are recommended; large enough to optimally utilize the resources put into the effort, but small enough to ensure that everyone in the room can interact with ease and feel engaged throughout. Time and energy should be invested in ensuring a receptive audience and a conducive environment.

It is important to frame the outreach activities in a general theme that is both positive and constructive (e.g., forging peace, character development) to prevent any possible stigmatization of the target audience by appearing to associate them with the potential for violent extremism.

Whatever shape or form the outreach activity takes, sharing sessions with victims who open up about the devastating impact that terrorist attacks have had on their lives should be central. In the event victims' stories are followed by the stories of other credible voices, the victims' perspectives should remain the principal focus of the engagement to emphasize common values of humanity. The facilitator guides the entire process to ensure active interactions and to create ample opportunities for constructive discussions and sharing of opinions. The facilitator also, where possible, ties all the different stories together to emphasize the key messages for peace.

The Victims' Voices experience in Indonesia structurally combined the voices of victims and other credible voices, including former perpetrators of terrorism, and brought them to youths across the country. As of January 2020, over 8,000 youths aged between 14 and 18 years old from over 160 schools had been engaged in sessions lasting an average of four hours. At the start of the engagements, the platform facilitators would prepare the audience, through ice-breaking games and breakout sessions, to make them optimally receptive to the stories to come. The audience would then usually first hear the story of a former perpetrator, who would explain how and why he or she had joined a terrorist group, then why he or she eventually left and was now contributing to peace efforts. A victim's story would then follow, with the victim sharing how a terrorist attack had impacted his or her life and how he or she had been able to bounce back, and forgive. These testimonies were followed by an open question-and-answer session guided by the platform facilitator, who would reiterate the core messages of non-violence.

Evaluating the impact of outreach activities

To understand the impact of the outreach activities, evaluative mechanisms need to be in place to quantify and qualify the results. Two different kinds of impacts can be assessed, namely, the impact of the outreach activity on the target audience and the impact on the participating victims.

Impact of outreach activity on target audience

Evaluating the impact of the outreach activities demonstrates whether the approach works. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluations can be employed to assess changes in attitudes and opinions of the respondents, that is, the target audience, relating to the use of violence.

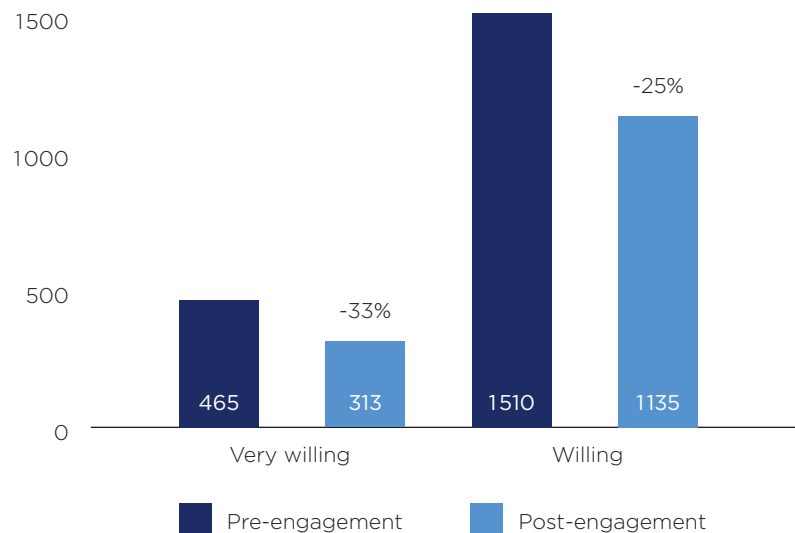
“... before attending this interactive dialogue today, I was of the opinion that [terrorist] bombers are in their right to do so, because, as earlier explained, they commit their actions in response to the trampling of the human rights of their brothers in other nations. I thought that was only fair. But after participating in this interactive dialogue, I have come to realize that such bombings are the result of a narrow mind ... I now believe such problems should not be solved with violence. If we start solving our problems with violence, it will only ruin the lives of innocent people.”

17-year-old youth, Klaten, Central Java, Indonesia, 19 October 2013

Questionnaires regarding respondents’ willingness to use violence across different situational contexts, on a graded scale, which are filled out before and after each engagement activity, provide a quantitative measure of changes in attitudes and opinions that can be directly attributed to the engagement with victims. Qualitative interviews give further nuance to the survey responses, as well as immediate insights into the respondents’ experience of the interactions and their takeaways.

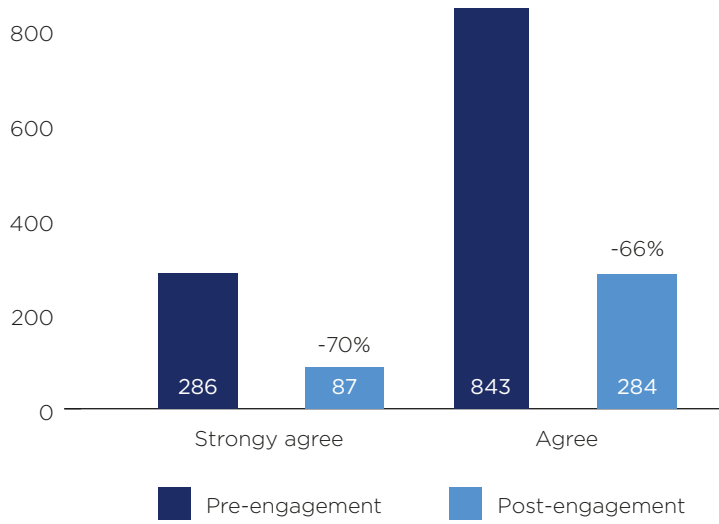
As of January 2020, the Victims’ Voices initiative in Indonesia had reached over 8,000 youths across the country. The initiative shows that victim-centric outreach efforts can make a significant contribution to the general state of peace by changing attitudes towards the use of violence as a tactical means to an end. By bringing victims and former perpetrators of terrorism directly to youths in at-risk areas to share their stories and engage them on a neutral platform, survey results indicate positive outcomes. The victim-centric approach, among others, has resulted in the attitudinal changes shown in figures II to IV.

Figure II. Responses to the question “If you’re requested to become a war volunteer to international conflict areas (such as Afghanistan, Iraq or the Syrian Arab Republic), how willing would you be?”



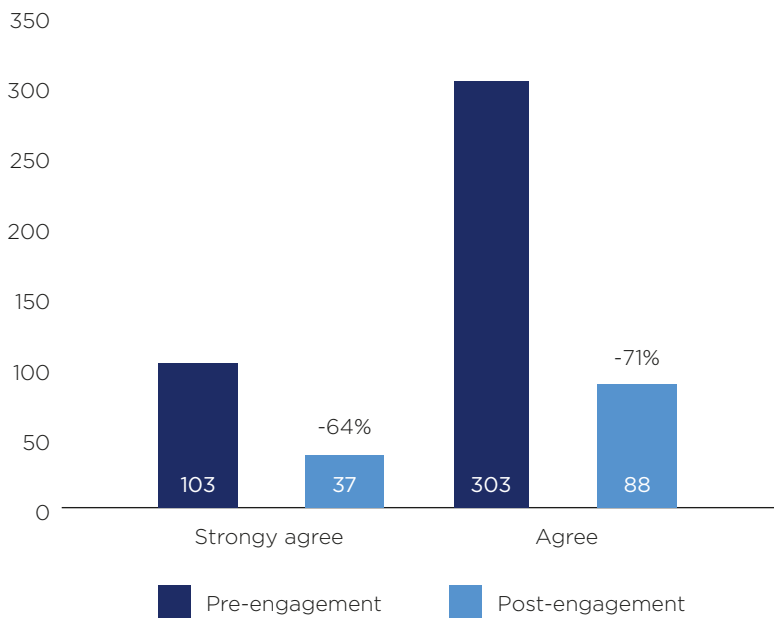
A 27 per cent decrease was noted in the number of students willing or very willing to become war volunteers in Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic or Afghanistan, representing 527 students out of a total of 1,975 originally willing

Figure III. Responses to the statement “If I or my family fall victim to an act of violence, I am entitled to take revenge”



A 67 per cent decrease was noted in the number of students agreeing or strongly agreeing they were entitled to take revenge if they or their family fell victim to an act of violence, representing 758 students out of a total of 1,129 originally agreeing

Figure IV. Responses to the statement “I have to avenge the global persecution of my fellow adherents by force/with violence wherever I may be”



A 69 per cent decrease was noted in the number of students agreeing or strongly agreeing that they had to avenge the global persecution of their fellow adherents with the use of force or violence wherever they may be, representing 281 students out of a total of 406 originally agreeing.

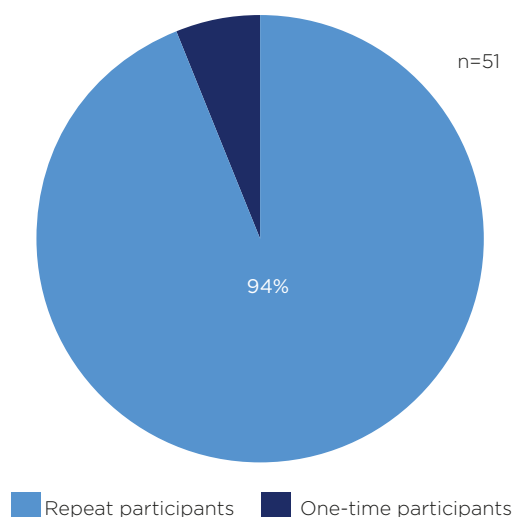
“When the victim spoke so emotionally about losing her husband to the bomb, I learned we have to prevent and oppose all actions that go against peace”

15-year-old youth, Ambon, Maluku, Indonesia, 22 August 2016

Impact of outreach activity on victims

For the sake of victims’ well-being, an evaluation of their experience of participating in outreach activities should be conducted at the close of the event. Beyond doing the necessary regular checks throughout the engagement process, gathering feedback relating to their personal experience helps to determine whether the procedures and processes in place have sufficiently safeguarded them from the known risks, whether there were any disconcerting experiences that had not been anticipated and what else could be done to support their continued participation. The well-being of victims remains a priority in any victim-centric approach.

Figure V. Repeat participation of victims in P/CVE outreach activities in Indonesia (as per May 2020)^a



^a All the one-time participants shared their enthusiasm about participating in P/CVE outreach activities, and showed their willingness to do so again. However, since most of them had only recently taken part for the first time, they had not yet had the opportunity to become repeat participants at the time of publication.

Platform-level internal evaluations

Periodic internal evaluation by the platform organization is important to ensure that activities are on track, objectives are met and the approach remains sound. Critical questions regarding impact should be continually assessed. It is good practice to take note of the strengths and weaknesses of the platform as an organization and as a space for societal engagement, as well as the kinds of challenges faced and whether such challenges are structural, or incidental and specific to a particular location, time, or group of persons involved. All outreach activities are based on dynamic human interactions, which makes each one unique. Honest and fair assessments about what works and what does not work help to reveal possible teething problems and contribute to a more robust approach.

Importance of platform facilitators

In each step of the process, platform facilitators clearly play an essential role. From the first preparatory meetings with the victims to the eventual running of the outreach activity, facilitators need to ensure the well-being of the victims, guide constructive discussions between parties and reinforce key messages of peace. Facilitators shoulder large responsibilities across the board, particularly in handling highly dynamic human relationships between individuals who would rarely encounter one another in real life as they occupy the same physical space.

Such facilitators, therefore, should have extensive experience in community engagement, with an in-depth knowledge of local issues, especially those relating to problems of violent extremism. Depending on the context, they should have established credentials in their respective fields of expertise. They are individuals who should also have the ability to form quick connections with people from all walks of life, can relate to others and are relatable themselves. Being approachable, amicable and good-humoured helps. These attributes may seem like a tall order, but these are also the characteristics of individuals already doing good work in local communities everywhere.

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CHAPTER IV. KEY TAKEAWAYS

The Victims' Voices experience has not been without challenges. Inherent to any novel endeavour are initial resistance to the new and untested, uncertainties regarding direction and viability, and discouraging false starts. The initiative, despite its demonstrable positive impact, is also highly context-specific, which has implications for replicability and transferability.

That said, there are key takeaways that can serve as building blocks for similar endeavours elsewhere. It is important to recognize contextual particularities in order to distil broader lessons that can be applied across contexts, relating to general approaches, processes, potential pitfalls and best practices.

Victims' stories have impact. Values of common humanity interwoven with the relevant ideological or theological underpinnings, brought directly by individuals who possess either moral, experiential or scholarly credibility, have the persuasive capacity to change attitudes regarding the utility of violence or, at the very least, to start debates. It is difficult to refute or argue against the hurt inflicted upon victims, especially when they are there to testify to the horrors of terrorism in person. Victims and their stories are no longer abstract concepts, but relatable human conditions.

Contextual differences affect impact, approach and victims' readiness. The Victims' Voices experience documented here consists of the outreach activities targeting youths that feature a working combination of victims alongside former perpetrators and religious figures. In activities that are aimed at different target audiences, the presence of victims alone has worked, too. Bearing in mind issues relating to feasibility, access and security, it may be useful to work out different combinations of voices of credibility suited to a specific context for local relevance, which may have implications for impact. Further, who the target audience is, in terms of its position as a majority or minority population may have implications for the framing of the approach, as the presence of strong rule of law has implications for victims' readiness to engage, which is different from what occurs in contexts where structures and mechanisms to meet the rights of victims are still being consolidated.

A neutral platform is necessary. A neutral platform can bring disparate elements together (e.g., victims, former perpetrators, religious figures, facilitators, target audiences, relevant State representatives) to focus on the mutual goal of preventing or countering violent extremism. The platform, equipped with the necessary tools and resources to train and guide all individuals utilizing it to connect with the wider public, ensures that everyone's stories remain their own.

Victims are central. Regardless of context, a victim-centric approach is sensitive to victims' needs and perspectives. Victims' right to protection must be respected, strengthened and fulfilled before envisioning them as contributors to higher-level national security concerns. Recovery may often take years, and irrespective of whether victims will eventually consider taking part in P/CVE endeavours, their needs must be prioritized. Support for victims remains a State obligation and an integral part of an effective global counter-terrorism strategy.

Victims occupy a politicized space. Victims of terrorism often find themselves operating within the realm of politics because they are victims of a crime that is in itself political in nature. Accordingly, on most matters relating to victims, including victims' needs, wider sociopolitical dynamics have to be taken into account, including a national security agenda. The politics within and among different victims' organizations and groups are also constantly evolving.

Impact assessment is important. Assessing impact by way of objective indicators is important in order to know whether or not a particular engagement works the way it is intended. An impact assessment is notoriously difficult in this field, particularly in determining whether an attack has indeed been prevented and if that can be directly attributed to a particular engagement. Accordingly, setting coherent aims and objectives, clearly identifying and defining indicators, addressing limitations up front and triangulating data as well as possible all help to ensure that analyses are based on robust methods of inquiry.

CONCLUSION

The main target of acts of terrorism may be the State, but the citizens who fall victim, serving as the message manifest, are the direct targets who bear the brunt of the harm. The victims are inextricably thrust into a political space that is tied to matters relating to statehood, national security, appropriate responses and counter-terrorism budgets. Victims inevitably become part of the terrorism equation as its most direct consequence, but their individual experience nevertheless takes the form of very human stories that should not become tied to securitized responses aimed at countering terrorism. The experience of Victims' Voices shows that victims' stories are most impactful when shared directly by victims, of their own agency and in their own words.

Drawing from research across different established disciplines and fields of practice, victims of terrorism, when they are supported in the right ways and provided the proper tools, can make significant contributions to the general state of peace. The present publication shines a light on how victims could do so within a structured framework – but without any expectations that they should. For those who choose to take part, Victims' Voices is but one way victims' stories could make a difference. The three-pronged strategic approach helps to ensure that victims' needs remain the top priority, that victims have freedom of association to represent their interests, and that the space, necessary structures and processes are in place for the establishment of a neutral platform where they can connect with and engage others to bring about impactful change. States can contribute to all three prongs by enhancing the rights of and assistance to victims, facilitating their creation of representative bodies and supporting the creation of an independent platform from which victims who are ready and willing can actively share their stories. With a proper victim-centric framework and mechanisms in place, victims can make significant contributions to the general state of peace by building resilience against divisive pro-violence rhetoric, reducing the appeal of terrorism and dissuading individuals from engaging in violent activities.



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