



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

# Handbook of Good Practices to Support Victims' Associations in Africa and the Middle East



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## Foreword

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**A**cross the world, many civil society initiatives have emerged over the last decades to offer practical support to victims of terrorism to help them recover. Some of these actions were initiated by victims themselves, others by civil society organizations willing to defend their rights and support their needs. Yet, it seems that for all these efforts to counter terrorism and to prevent violent extremism, victims of terrorism continue to be marginalized and forgotten.

Victims continue to be the biggest losers in the fight against terrorism. As terrorist acts indiscriminately target different countries, cultures and religions, the largest proportion of casualties are ordinary people. In understanding the ramifications of a terrorist act on the civilian population and the need to support victims, victims' networks and organizations have been established, often organically, as a direct response to a terrorist act. Although each entity and body is unique to its national and cultural context and to the type of services they provide, these organizations all have one goal in common: to assist victims of terrorism in upholding their rights and supporting their needs.

The United Nations has had the honour to work with many victims' organizations. Sadly, as a result of the increase in attacks globally, our victims network keeps growing. These organizations have a wealth of knowledge and experience of working, supporting and assisting victims of terrorism. As a result of our interactions with many such entities, the United Nations is uniquely situated to gather the valuable knowledge and experience of participating victims' associations from across Africa and the Middle East and distill them into the present *Handbook of Good Practices to Support Victims' Associations in Africa and the Middle East*.

This *Handbook* is the result of an inclusive and participatory process that gathered victims, experts and representatives from victims' associations from across Africa and the Middle East, many of them direct victims of terrorism. I have found it inspiring that despite their suffering and their loss, they have decided to act as game-changers for themselves and for others, and that the *Handbook* is an opportunity to spread their knowledge and help other victims and victims' associations effect change.



**Vladimir Voronkov**  
Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism.

**PHOTO:** UN Photo/Mark Garten

Victims of terrorism and victims' associations have a lot to teach us. They are trailblazers for other victims' associations, and often it is thanks to their continuous efforts that governments have improved their assistance and support to victims of terrorism. I would like to thank the many victims and victims' associations who worked with the Office of Counter-Terrorism to develop the *Handbook*, and who willingly gave of their time and knowledge to better help and support other victims' associations.

I hope this *Handbook* will serve as a useful toolkit not only for civil society organizations across Africa and the Middle East that support victims of terrorism, but for all those who wish to end terrorism and prevent violent extremism. We will be better equipped to defeat terrorism by listening to those who are directly affected by these heinous acts. Together, our efforts can make a huge difference.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Voronkov', written in a cursive style.

**Vladimir Voronkov**  
Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism

# Contents

	<i>Page</i>
<b>Foreword</b> .....	iii
<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>I. Building and sustaining resilience at the community and individual level</b> .....	4
A. Reaching out and helping victims recover after a terrorist act .....	4
Box I.A: Good practices in reaching out and helping victims recover after a terrorist act .....	6
B. Specific needs of child victims of terrorism .....	6
Box I.B: Good practices in supporting child victims of terrorism .....	7
C. Specific needs of victims of sexual violence perpetrated by terrorist groups .....	8
Box I.C: Good practices in supporting victims of sexual violence perpetrated by terrorist groups .....	9
D. From building individual resilience to enhancing community resilience .....	9
Box I.D: Good practices in strengthening community resilience .....	10
<b>II. Financial and non-financial assistance to victims of terrorism</b> .....	11
A. Providing victims with access to social services .....	12
Box II.A: Good practices in providing victims with access to social services .....	12
B. Helping victims of terrorism to become financially independent .....	13
Box II.B: Good practices in supporting victims of terrorism to become financially independent .....	13
C. Providing assistance for legal and administrative procedures to victims of terrorism .....	14
Box II.C: Good practices in offering victims of terrorism assistance in various legal and administrative procedures .....	15
<b>III. Outreach and advocacy to better promote victims' rights</b> .....	16
A. Participating in policymaking to better promote victims' rights .....	17
Box III.A: Good practices in participating in policymaking to better promote victims' rights .....	18
B. Raising public awareness of the plight of victims of terrorism .....	18
Box III.B: Good practices in raising public awareness on the plight of victims of terrorism .....	19
C. Building national, regional and international networks of victims' associations .....	20
Box III.C: Good practices in building national, regional and international networks of victims' associations .....	20
<b>IV. Raising victims' voices in preventing violent extremism</b> .....	21
A. Criteria for victims' associations to engage in strategies for preventing violent extremism .....	21
Box IV.A: Good practices for victims' associations to engage in strategies to prevent violent extremism .....	22
B. Securing victims' rights when engaging in activities to prevent violent extremism .....	23
Box IV.B: Good practices in securing victims' rights when engaging in activities to prevent violent extremism .....	24
C. Ensuring victims' well-being remains at heart of strategies to prevent violent extremism .....	24
Box IV.C: Good practices in ensuring victims' well-being remains at heart of strategies to prevent violent extremism .....	25
D. Developing effective counter-narrative strategies .....	25
Box IV.D: Good practices in developing efficient counter-narrative strategies .....	26
<b>Glossary</b> .....	27

# Introduction

In the past, attention has been focused on the act of terror and its perpetrators, with scant regard for the effects of these acts on ordinary people—the victims. Over the years, this has increasingly led to the de-humanization of victims and an ever more limited space for their voices to be heard and their rights protected. The Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (henceforth known as the Strategy),<sup>1</sup> adopted by the General Assembly in 2006, carved out a place for victims by acknowledging that the lack of support to victims and their increasing marginalization and discrimination contributed to creating conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism (Pillar I), and the importance of promoting, respecting and protecting victims' rights (Pillar IV).

This acknowledgement has further encouraged Member States to focus on victims of terrorism, and has led to the last three resolutions on the review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy,<sup>2</sup> noting and emphasizing the important role that victims can play in the counter-narrative, as well as the need to support victims and strengthen the efforts of Member States in this regard. However, the lack of strong and sustainable support by Member States and the international community for victims of terrorism continues to be a challenge, and although much of the onus has fallen on human rights and victims' associations and civil society organizations to support them, the lack of knowledge, skills and resources contributes to their struggle to protect and assist victims of terrorism.

The Office of Counter-Terrorism,<sup>3</sup> established by General Assembly resolution 71/291 on 15 June 2017, has five core main functions, one being to strengthen

capacity-building assistance to Member States. The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) is the main capacity-building arm of the Office of Counter-Terrorism and lists victims of terrorism as one of its six strategic priorities. Its dedicated portfolio on victims of terrorism has five priority areas, with one of the key areas being to build the capacity of both Member States and civil society organizations to support victims of terrorism.<sup>4</sup>

Over the years, the United Nations system has delivered a broad range of programming related to supporting victims of terrorism, including the activities of the Office of Counter-Terrorism, such as the Secretary-General's Symposium on supporting victims of terrorism in 2008;<sup>5</sup> a media workshop for victims of terrorism in 2011; the United Nations Victims of Terrorism Support Portal, launched by the Secretary-General during the fourth review of the Strategy in June 2014;<sup>6</sup> media and communication training for victims across the sub-

..... and that the important work on preventing violent extremism is firmly rooted in the Strategy.

<sup>4</sup> UNCCT has detailed its work on victims under Output 3.2 of its five-year Programme of Work. Under this output, UNCCT has laid out five priority areas: (1) campaign for global awareness on the role of victims of terrorism, including victims' participation to prevent the spread of violent extremism and terrorism; (2) support the integration of victims of terrorism into national and regional counter-terrorism strategies and enhance the legal framework on victims of terrorism; (3) develop and support projects to enhance Member State capacities to assist victims and to show solidarity with victims of terrorism; (4) develop and implement capacity-building projects to enhance the ability of victims to counter the narrative of violent extremists and terrorists; and (5) strengthen the United Nations Victims of Terrorism Support Portal as a key resource through enhanced content generation and outreach.

<sup>5</sup> The report of the Symposium, "Supporting the Victims of Terrorism", is available at [www.un.org/en/terrorism/ctitf/pdfs/un\\_report\\_supporting\\_victims\\_terrorism.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/terrorism/ctitf/pdfs/un_report_supporting_victims_terrorism.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> The United Nations Victims of Terrorism Support Portal's main objective is to ensure that victims' voices are heard, that those working for and on behalf of victims will be provided with the space and opportunity to come together and use a common platform to share ideas, information and resources. The Portal is a tangible mechanism that seeks to express the international community's solidarity with victims and their families and also provides them with the means to look for practical support and assistance. One of the key elements of the Portal, as a resource hub, is the Government Support page that gives victims and their families an understanding of how to access the criminal justice system offered by Member States and the key domestic legislation that covers their rights. The Portal can be visited at [www.un.org/victimsofterrorism/en](http://www.un.org/victimsofterrorism/en).

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<sup>1</sup> General Assembly resolution 60/288.  
<sup>2</sup> General Assembly resolutions 66/282, 68/276 and 70/291.  
<sup>3</sup> The Office of Counter-Terrorism has five main functions: (a) provide leadership on the General Assembly counter-terrorism mandates entrusted to the Secretary-General from across the United Nations system; (b) enhance coordination and coherence across the 38 Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force entities to ensure the balanced implementation of the four pillars of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy; (c) strengthen the delivery of United Nations counter-terrorism capacity-building assistance to Member States; (d) improve visibility, advocacy and resource mobilization for United Nations counter-terrorism efforts; and (e) ensure that due priority is given to counterterrorism across the United Nations system

Saharan Africa and MENA regions;<sup>7</sup> and a documentary series on victims' resilience across the world.

The Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) Working Group on Supporting and Highlighting Victims of Terrorism was established to strengthen the support of, and the comprehensive work on, the effective implementation of Pillar I and Pillar IV of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy related to victims of terrorism. Chaired by the Office of Counter-Terrorism, it consists of 11 entities and has an active workplan which seeks to contribute to the advancement and promotion of the rights of, and support to, victims of terrorism.<sup>8</sup> The project to develop the present *Handbook* has been implemented under the umbrella of this Working Group.

To mark the tenth anniversary of the Strategy, the Office of Counter-Terrorism, under the umbrella of the Working Group, and in collaboration with the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, held the Conference on the Human Rights of Victims of Terrorism in New York in February 2016. The conference explored a greater understanding of the human rights of victims of terrorism at the international, regional and national level, contributing to policy and legal development in this area, as envisaged in the Strategy. The conference also provided strategic direction on victims of terrorism and made several recommendations, including a recommendation to develop guidelines to support

victims of terrorism, including on preventing **violent extremism**.<sup>9,10</sup>

In furtherance of the recommendation of the international conference, and based on the Strategy, subsequent review resolutions, and the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, the Office of Counter-Terrorism, under the umbrella of the Working Group, developed a project to develop and disseminate the present *Handbook* that aims to empower and strengthen civil society organizations to support victims of terrorism by developing good practices in key areas that have been practically implemented with successful outcomes over the long term, and can be adapted to national contexts.

An empowered civil society creates a stronger environment, a more articulate and coherent voice and increased awareness on the protection of victims of terrorism' rights and interests. By articulating victims' concerns, civil society organizations, including victims' associations, help empower their voices to put forward alternative narratives to those of violent extremists, further protect the human rights of victims of terrorism, raise awareness on the plight of victims, and contribute towards more effective victims-centric policies of Member States.

Four expert group meetings were held with representatives of victims' associations, civil society organizations and victims from Africa, the Middle East, Europe and North America, as well as experts from the United Nations to share experiences, good practices and approaches in four main areas:

- (i) Good practices on raising victims' voices in preventing violent extremism (Nairobi, Kenya, 27–30 June 2017);
- (ii) Good practices on building and sustaining resilience at the community and individual level (Casablanca, Morocco, 1–4 August 2017);
- (iii) Good practices on outreaching and advocating to better promote victims' rights, (Amman, Jordan, 22–25 August 2017);
- (iv) Good practices on financial and non-financial assistance to victims of terrorism (Dakar, Senegal, 10–13 October 2017).

<sup>7</sup> The workshops sought to strengthen victims' voices and enable them to put forward alternate narratives to those of violent extremists. It provided training and capacity-building to victims of terrorism in order to enhance their knowledge, understanding and interaction with the media, in all its forms, while improving their capacity to prevent, respond to and counteract the narrative of violent extremists through the development of longer-term communication strategies.

<sup>8</sup> The Working Group includes the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, the Department of Public Information, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Special Rapporteur on promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs as an observer.

<sup>9</sup> The full report of the conference is available on the United Nations Victims of Terrorism Support Portal ([www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/sites/www.un.org.counterterrorism.ctitf/files/FINAL%20Report%20of%20the%20Conference\\_0.pdf](http://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/sites/www.un.org.counterterrorism.ctitf/files/FINAL%20Report%20of%20the%20Conference_0.pdf)).

<sup>10</sup> Terms highlighted in **orange** can be found in the glossary.

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A validation conference that brought together many of the participants from the above four expert group meetings was held from 29 January to 2 February 2018, in Accra, Ghana, to discuss the final version of the *Handbook* and to discuss possible dissemination strategies.

Drawing upon the discussion and experiences of the experts as well as through research and information, a list of what can be considered good practices has been compiled in the four key areas. It is by no means an exhaustive list but is indicative of the main principles thought important by the participants and has found to be impactful, sustainable, adaptive to local contexts and effective. The *Handbook* has been drafted in an easy-to-read format, where the good practices are readily accessible, can be referenced quickly and easily and be duplicated for reapplication and adaptation to other contexts.

Although the *Handbook* is largely aimed at supporting and empowering, victims' associations and civil society organizations working with and for victims by providing them with an overarching framework and set of guiding principles and practices, it can also be used by Member States, policymakers and practitioners who might find the good practices useful in developing and supporting work on and for victims in the four areas.

The Office of Counter-Terrorism hopes that the *Handbook* will contribute to the implementation of effective policies and practices that are victim-centric. By enacting the good practices laid out in this *Handbook*, the Office of Counter-Terrorism hopes there will be a greater awareness and acknowledgement of victims as integral not only to countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism but also as ordinary people whose lives have been affected by terrible acts and whose rights and needs must be both respected and protected.



# I. Building and sustaining resilience at the community and individual level

It is often the case that public opinion tends to be at its highest in expressing profound and intense solidarity towards victims of terrorism and their families in the immediate aftermath of a terrorist act. This solidarity, however, can disappear quite quickly as time and events move on.

This short-lived feeling of solidarity can have profound consequences, especially in countries that either fail to recognize victims of terrorism or fail to provide comprehensively for their needs and where victims are largely left to deal with their suffering alone. Yet, because of the violence of the attack, victims of terrorism often require long-term multi-dimensional support to help them recover and cope with their trauma.

Victims' associations can offer tools and techniques that help victims of terrorism build and consolidate their own resilience. This support can often go beyond the immediate emergency response and physical rescue in order to enhance long-term recovery and help victims reintegrate into society.

The concept of resilience, often defined as the ability to cope with adversity and adapt to challenges or change, is more frequently used to define the process that victims of terrorism go through when facing terrorist threats and acts.

Healing does not mean forgetting about the attack. It is about learning to live with it and building lives around it. It is a continuous process. Victims of terrorism will never be able to fully revert to their previous lives. They will have to learn to live differently, as a second life emerges after the attack. The objective, therefore, is to achieve a level of resilience that aids with healing and recovery.

Resilience is not only important at the individual level but also at the community level, as both have the ultimate goal of achieving overall resilience. Strengthening resilience of the community is crucial in the fight against terrorism, as a strong and united community will be less vulnerable to the impacts of terrorism. It is also a key enabler to promote recovery at the macro level, which helps in turn to support individual victims of terrorism. As a result, communities are stronger, and are able to cope, heal and recover more rapidly after an attack. The

overall goal, therefore, is to achieve a level of resilience at the community level that provides support and synergies in aiding the resilience of individual victims.

Although it is the State's primary responsibility to look after its population and, in the event of a terrorist act, to provide recovery support to victims of terrorism, victims' associations can play an important role in strengthening individual and collective resilience. Civil society initiatives are often complementary to public recovery programmes—when such programmes exist—by being able to provide direct, closer and more extensive support to individual victims, which sometimes goes beyond what public initiatives may offer.

Victims' associations contribute to building resilience at the individual level by getting close to the victims, delivering personalized and timely support, offering access to the breadth of broader support available and providing effective advocacy in support of the victim.

Similarly, victims' associations can also help build collective resilience at the community level through initiatives such as the establishment and awareness raising of support programmes, including communicating and coordinating emergency and long-term efforts, in the event of an attack. Victims' associations can also offer support programmes in a safe and secure environment; are able to help communities be aware of potential scenarios, behaviours and actions required; and make victims aware of public and private resources available to assist and respond with recovery support, particularly if a State does not have the requisite tools and resources to support victims of terrorism. The responsibility can be greater if victims' associations are the only actors in the field. They are often in a better position to help victims of terrorism, particularly if they have access to vulnerable and marginalized groups who are often disenfranchised from national authorities.

## A. Reaching out and helping victims recover after a terrorist act

**Trauma** that results from a terrorist act generally differs from trauma caused by a common crime. As civilians are randomly targeted, terrorist acts can cause greater and longer-lasting trauma that can impact victims for the rest of their lives. Some victims may not even understand what has happened to them, may not want to recognize the impact of an act of terror or may live in denial. Victims of terrorism should never be pushed nor forced to be helped. Every individual is different and requires different support approaches in their

rehabilitation. Sometimes it can take several months or years after a terrorist act has occurred before victims of terrorism seek support, yet understanding the importance of this support is vital for their recovery.

It is also imperative that support be provided soon after an attack has occurred, recognizing that this is instrumental to the healing process. However, seeking mental and psychological support can be, in some cultural contexts, badly perceived, both by victims themselves and society, due to the stigma associated in undergoing such treatment. Victims' associations and others can play a key role in helping the victim overcome this perception and seek the assistance they require.

Reaching out and supporting victims is often one of the hardest tasks. Many victims are often unaware of the support services on offer and what they are able to access. Informing victims of terrorism of the range of support available is critical. Victims' associations are uniquely well positioned to reach victims and offer this information as they become a repository on the public and private support programmes available. In some contexts, they are also able to offer victims recovery support in a manner that is undertaken with privacy, discretion and confidence.

Yet, victims' associations need to be attentive and receptive to victims' needs, earning and building on trust as both organizations and victims go through the process. Organizations need to understand the context and the person before proposing any psychological support, and be able to assess and support the fulfilment of victims' primary needs, in such basic areas as food, accommodation and clothing. For example, a victim of terrorism will not be as receptive to psychological support if his or her vital needs are not satisfied or if his or her life is endangered. It is vital that victims trust the organization, and above all, the focal point within the organization, before any healing process begins or other basic needs are fulfilled.

Victims' associations can also play a constructive role in bringing people who share a common experience together by providing a common platform and space. Feeling safe in a trusted community and supported by other victims who know and understand what they are going through is often cited as key to the healing process and being resilient. Other survivors can listen to victims and help them understand that it is "normal" to feel negative emotions such as anger and frustration and can help them deal with these emotions. Interacting with someone who has gone through a similar traumatic

event gives a unique feeling of being "listened to" and "understood" and can be very helpful. Knowing that they are not alone can help victims' healing process enormously.

Victims' associations can also reach out to victims' relatives, peers and communities, if helpful, and without impinging on the confidentiality of services established, to raise general awareness on trauma that victims of terrorism go through. Outreach, as directed by the victim, can have an important impact on how the victim is treated within the family, community and society as a whole. In this way, awareness of trauma is built into the individual, family and national consciousness, thereby helping the victim to be better understood and resulting in more effective and sustainable treatment and support for the victim.

Sustainability of treatment and support is key. In order for a victim to fully recover there needs to be investment in long-term support, particularly to avoid **retraumatization**. Victims who are involved in other proceedings, for example a criminal justice matter, also have the potential to be traumatized again (**secondary traumatization**). Healing processes can be effective only if victims feel safe, protected and the processes are positively impactful and sustainable over the longer term.

Many victims' associations are often created by previous victims of terrorist acts. While this can be a way of strengthening their own resilience, there is also a risk of becoming retraumatized or experiencing secondary traumatization if they do not have professional support or if they put their well-being aside while taking care of other victims. Supporting victims of terrorism can also have an impact on professionals working in victims' associations and appropriate care should be taken to avoid their traumatization.

Religious leaders can also be instrumental in dispelling the stigma around victims and in keeping the cohesiveness of the community intact and help it in its healing and recovery process. Religious leaders are important influencers in communities, providing powerful channels for delivering messages that can educate, unite and motivate by influencing and galvanizing the community to prepare, act and react. They are in a unique position to effectively build on the actions of national authorities and civil society organizations to build more resilient communities and create better support for victims. This support structure should only complement and not compensate for appropriate medical and psychological support to victims that is needed for them to heal and overcome their trauma.

## Box I.A

### Good practices in reaching out and helping victims recover after a terrorist act

#### **Inform victims of terrorism about the different types of support available**

Victims' associations should inform victims about the services they offer by either directly reaching out to them to offer support or through a well-established network of different stakeholders, such as public authorities, security forces, other civil society organizations and community leaders.

#### **Invest in building a relationship of trust and be receptive to victims' needs**

Victims' associations should build trust with victims by being attentive and receptive to victims' needs and wishes. Before proposing any support, they should assess the victims' primary and vital needs and make sure these can be fulfilled. If appropriate, psychological support can be provided simultaneously, in accordance with the victims' desires and needs. Victims' associations should listen to victims and help them understand that it is normal to feel negative emotions, such as anger and frustration, and if possible should help in providing assistance for victims to deal with these emotions.

#### **Adapt to the rhythm and the needs of each victim**

Victims' associations should show professionalism, by not "forcing" victims into support services and by

giving them the time and space they need to ask for support. If a victim is in denial or refuses to be helped, victims' associations can offer techniques and tools, if appropriate, to members of the family to better help the victim.

#### **Inviting victims of previous terrorist acts to meet with new victims can help strengthen their respective resilience**

Involving victims of previous terrorist acts in the healing process of new victims may strengthen their respective resilience. As they share a traumatic experience in common, they can often better understand each other. Previous victims can also explain what they have been through and describe what challenges they have encountered, how they have dealt with them and coped with them.

#### **Ensure the staff of victims' associations receive adequate support while helping victims**

The risk of traumatization is possible for professionals working for a victims' association. Victims' associations should ensure that they understand and recognize the signs of traumatization and secondary traumatization in all victims with whom they interact and should have in place support strategies for their staff and volunteers, who can also be at risk.

## B. Specific needs of child victims of terrorism

Children who are affected by a terrorist act will require focused, specialized and individual support to address their unique needs in the short, medium and long term, as children and youth perceive violence and death differently and are often more vulnerable to the effects of terrorist acts.<sup>11</sup> Any approach that caters to children must have the best interests of the child at heart and operate on the "do no harm" principle.

<sup>11</sup> For more information, see UNICEF, "Silent Shame: Bringing out the voices of children caught in the Lake Chad crisis" (2017). Available at [https://www.unicef.org/wcaro/nigeriaregionalcrisis/UNICEF\\_Silent\\_shame.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/wcaro/nigeriaregionalcrisis/UNICEF_Silent_shame.pdf).

Terrorism-related traumatic injuries in children can be severe and increases the demand for acute care, particularly as child victims tend to express their symptoms differently than adults. Victims' associations must have the appropriate accreditation to work with children in order to support and help them communicate, express their feelings and heal both mentally and physically. Only child-certified psychologists should deal with child victims, and any activities and support, be it through art, sports or family/group therapy, should be age appropriate.

Victims' associations can utilize their unique knowledge, skills and resources to help children understand what has happened, with the appropriate words and means, and are also well placed to know how to sensitively handle children's anxieties and trauma. Children need

to understand what has occurred in an enabling environment that supports them in resuming their lives.

It has been noted that bringing child victims together, from different communities or in some cases from other countries, is also a healthy way to help children in their recovery process and build resilience in youth affected by trauma. In this way, girls and boys understand that they are not alone and are able to develop empathy

by interacting with other impacted children. This kind of programme also builds understanding and tolerance, and promotes shared humanity by promoting intercultural dialogue, tolerance and peacebuilding, which reduces the adverse effects of terrorism. It can also contribute to preventing violent extremism by widening understanding of different cultural and national viewpoints and breaking down barriers and stereotypes.

### Box 1.B

#### Good practices in supporting child victims of terrorism

##### **Ensure that there is age-appropriate support, communication and information for children and youth in order to help them express their feelings, views and concerns**

Victims' associations must have the required background, skills, knowledge and tools to support and assist child and youth victims of terrorism with psychological support. Victims' associations should implement child-centric approaches to communicate with and support girls and boys who have been affected by terrorist acts to help them recover and reintegrate back into society and their lives, based on the underlying principle of "do no harm". If this is not possible, then victims' association should work together with other organizations that has the appropriate skill set and knowledge to support child and youth victims.

##### **Work in an environment where the child feels safest**

Victims' associations should provide a safe and secure environment for all child victims with child-centric policies and trained personnel to deal with children affected by terrorism. Victims' associations should be aware of, and base support and treatment on, age and gender, understanding that the needs of

girls and boys will be significantly different. Where appropriate, victims' associations should work with family members, peers, teachers and others important figures of trust in the child's environment to consolidate and enhance the recovery process.

##### **Knowledge about all the types of support available for their child**

Victims' associations should have full knowledge of what resources, support and activities are available from the State and other non-State actors for child victims to be assisted in the short, medium and long term.

##### **Partner and network with organizations from other communities/countries to increase connection and reduce isolation for children and youth by interacting with other children/youth victims from other communities/countries**

Victims' associations should recognize that initiatives that can connect children and youth victims across cultural, community and national boundaries can help them feel less isolated, understand that they are not alone and share common experiences with other children and youth, as well as contribute to their healing and resilience.

### C. Specific needs of victims of sexual violence perpetrated by terrorist groups

Some terrorist groups have used sexual violence, forced marriage, torture and slavery as a tactic of terrorism.<sup>12</sup> This violence disproportionately impacts women and girls, boys and men, often from certain communities and adds an additional layer of stigma that impedes reintegration and challenges victims' resilience.

The use of sexual violence as a terror tactic has long-lasting and pernicious effects on victims and their communities, especially women and girl victims who tend to be the largest group of victims of sexual violence. The use of this tactic often results in secondary **victimization**. In traditional communities, rape can lead to strong **stigmatization** of victims. Victims of sexual violence can be rejected by the community because they are considered "impure" or "worthless".

As a result, victims of sexual violence can be reluctant to speak about their experience, as they may feel shame and guilt or know that they will be isolated in their communities and may refuse to seek help and justice as a consequence. Some victims may also live in denial or not be aware that they can ask for help and support. Victims' associations should respect all kinds of reactions and adopt a gender-sensitive approach that is able to effectively deal with all victims of sexual violence whether it be girls, boys, women or men in a safe and enabling environment.

What makes victims of sexual violence different from other victims is the mental impact in addition to the physical trauma. Victims of sexual violence have gone through complex forms of violence that can require different forms of support, including physical, specialized psychological, social and economic assistance. The primary needs of victims of sexual violence will always require urgent action before other needs can be addressed. Their safety and well-being should always be placed before other considerations and as with child victims, the principle of "do no harm" is paramount to any subsequent actions undertaken. After this, the necessary immediate and long-term support

through, for example, medical, psychological and financial assistance, can be provided for.

This support often takes the form of specific programmes, which require appropriate skills and knowledge to treat victims of sexual violence. Such capabilities are required for the associations to provide the necessary support to the victims to reintegrate into their communities to become autonomous and independent, thereby limiting the risks of secondary victimization. Only those organizations well qualified to assist victims of sexual violence should extend support. If the victims' association does not have the required expertise and resources to assist and support victims of sexual violence, then all victims of sexual violence should be recommended to another organization who has the appropriate skill set and knowledge to adequately and effectively handle their trauma and healing process.

Raising awareness on the status of victims of sexual violence contributes to their healing and recovery process. Victims' associations can play an important role in advocacy and awareness raising with national authorities on the specific care and attention that should be provided to victims of sexual violence, for example, by training public officers on how to fully support victims of sexual violence and advocating for a victim-centric approach, taking into account traumatic acts such as sexual violence, in legal procedures.

Victims' associations can also be instrumental in raising awareness on stigmatization and its consequences, and can facilitate victims' reintegration within their communities. Outreach campaigns can be effective and can be accomplished through a variety of mechanisms that are appropriate to the local context. Some outreach campaigns, such as small-group dialogues, theatrical plays or community radio programmes, have brought positive results among communities and have helped victims of sexual violence return home.

As victims of sexual violence have specific needs, key interlocutors, such as lawyers, psychologists, magistrates and law enforcement officers, must have proper training so they do not exacerbate their trauma or put them in danger. It remains important that any activity, process or procedure that involves victims of sexual violence must be compassionate and non-judgmental to minimize victims being retraumatized and to restore their dignity and human rights. Victims' well-being and safety should always be paramount in all matters.

<sup>12</sup> Security Council resolution 2331 (2016). For more information, also see the report of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (S/2016/1090, annex) and the report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2018/250).



## Box 1.C

### Good practices in supporting victims of sexual violence perpetrated by terrorist groups

#### **Respect the decisions of the victim and their pace**

The best interests of victims of sexual violence always comes first. Victims' associations should always support victims of sexual violence and should give them the time and space they need to heal from their experience, with the necessary support resources available. It is important to recognize that victims of sexual violence choose to tell of their experiences in their own time.

#### **Implement a holistic approach**

Victims' associations should implement a holistic approach when supporting victims of sexual violence to help in their recovery and healing and understand that support will differ between girls and boys, women and men, including medical psychological and sometimes financial support.

#### **Support victims of sexual violence to successfully reintegrate back into society through well-established procedures**

Victims' associations should have well-established, well-regarded and well-informed procedures that enable them to identify and provide appropriate

solutions to fulfil the most urgent needs, as well as the financial and legal needs of victims of sexual violence, following a gender-sensitive approach.

#### **Reduce the risk of stigmatization that may appear after a victim returns to the community**

Victims' associations play an important role in helping victims of sexual violence reintegrate into society. They should take into account the benefits of working with families and communities to raise awareness on the plight of victims of sexual violence in order to reduce the risk of stigmatization especially for girl and women victims.

#### **Advocate for a victim-centric approach and ensure that any actor dealing with victims of sexual violence are well-trained to interact with them**

To the extent possible, victims' associations should work with professionals who are well-qualified, trained and have experience in dealing effectively with victims of sexual violence. Victims' associations should try to establish a referral network to ensure that specific needs of victims of sexual violence are adequately met.

## **D. From building individual resilience to enhancing community resilience**

Terrorism creates fear and suffering that not only affects individuals but also threatens communities and society at large. Terrorist acts can generate a lot of spontaneous popular solidarity for victims and a community as a whole, but they can also lead to nationalist and extremist reactions that can break social ties and jeopardize the cohesion of societies.

Building community resilience allows society as a whole to be better prepared to recover from any further terrorist attack. Community resilience differs from individual resilience as the macro-level approach is able to leverage a larger swathe of resources on a much broader and strategic level. Communities and societies must be prepared in advance to address the needs of affected populations in the event of a terrorist act and have in place the necessary support required for victims

and survivors. A resilient and cohesive population is a powerful tool in the recovery from a terrorist act.

Victims' associations can play an integral part in supporting and building resilience among populations that have been affected by terrorist acts and in strengthening the ability of communities to cope with traumatic events and provide them with the knowledge and tools necessary to rebuild the society in the short, medium and long term.

This can be done through a number of approaches, for example by developing outreach campaigns to promote tolerance, intercultural dialogue and peacebuilding, and by supporting victims' voices that reaffirm universal values and condemn hate speech and violence. These approaches can foster resilience against acts of terrorism at both the community and national level and help victims feel integral to society.

Victims' associations can also encourage communities and societies to strengthen solidarity with victims of

terrorism, as strong national support plays a vital role in helping victims recover from the trauma at both the individual and collective levels and helps society reaffirm

its unity around universal values. National solidarity brings communities and societies closer, strengthens bonds and further builds national cohesion.

**Box I.D**

**Good practices in strengthening community resilience**

**Raise victims' voices in public spaces**

Victims' associations should be able to offer support and guidance when victims wish to share their stories, promote positive messages, and speak about their own resilience and personal experience at the grassroots, community and national levels.<sup>a</sup>

**Encourage solidarity and social change towards victims**

Victims' associations should encourage solidarity and social change towards victims by encouraging people to offer support to victims after a terrorist act has occurred. Support can take multiple form through a variety of approaches, such as promoting awareness of needs, fostering dialogue and supporting victims' voices.

**Promote social cohesion and enhance national resilience**

Wherever possible, victims' associations should contribute to strengthen social cohesion and enhance national resilience by encouraging dialogue and peacebuilding between communities so terrorism does not break social ties and does not threaten the fundamental grounds upon which societies and democracies are founded. This can be done by bringing victims of different communities together and have them gather around projects that highlight their common bonds.

**Condemn narratives that call for violence, killing and destruction**

Victims' associations should condemn narratives that call for violence, killing and destruction. If their laws and mandates allow them to, they should report abuse and pursue and seek justice when they become aware of it.

<sup>a</sup> See chapter 4 below.

## II. Financial and non-financial assistance to victims of terrorism

When a terrorist act occurs, it is essentially intended to target the State. However, the indiscriminate nature of a terrorist attack often results in a large number of civilian casualties. As the primary gatekeeper of its citizens security, the State is responsible for ensuring full and fair reparation to victims.<sup>13</sup> Yet, reparations remain a sensitive and complicated topic, with a wide divergence of practices.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, many Member States often lack the resources and mechanisms to establish appropriate financial compensation, non-financial assistance and reparation remedies for victims of terrorism. The Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law,<sup>15</sup> adopted by the General Assembly in 2005, includes five different categories of reparation: **restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction, and guarantees of non-repetition.**

Compensation and reparation need not only take a monetary form but can also take on many other forms to more adequately respond to the different needs of victims. Reparation can be, for example, financial, medical or social to cover victims' needs over a specific period of time, as often particular needs and medical issues can surface long after the terrorist act has occurred. In many countries, access to social services can be limited due to the lack of financial resources of the State. Non-governmental organizations are often the main providers of these services, especially in failed States or in countries at war.

<sup>13</sup> For more information on the responsibility of the State in compensation mechanisms, see the 2012 Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism on the framework principles for securing the human rights of victims of terrorism (A/HRC/20/14).

<sup>14</sup> In some legal systems, the responsibility to compensate victims of terrorism lies with the perpetrator, but obtaining compensation from perpetrators, in the counter-terrorism context, can be extremely difficult either because he or she has died in the attack, is brought to justice but does not have the financial resources or is unknown or untraceable.

<sup>15</sup> See General Assembly resolution 60/147, annex.

Financial assistance over the short, medium and long term is vital to allow victims of terrorism to recover and manage in their everyday life. Compensation and financial assistance also contributes to protect the fundamental rights of victims by restoring their dignity and helping them become economically independent, especially if they were severely injured by a terrorist act. However, reparation mechanisms differ considerably between countries, and are often based on the recognition of victims and their rights, the overall approach towards reparation and the availability of financial and economic resources at hand. Countries that experience high levels of terrorist acts—and where victims are the most numerous—tend to be countries where funds and resources are more limited.

Proper social support for victims of terrorism is essential to facilitate their reintegration into society and to fulfil their human rights. This means that to effectively recover from a terrorist act, victims need access to basic social services, such as medical care, housing and food. By establishing these welfare measures, victims' rights are protected while restoring their dignity and independence. Victims' associations can advocate for **victim-centric approaches** when national authorities develop policies and services for victims of terrorism.

Administrative and legal procedures should be understood as any interaction—whether in person, through representation or by mail—between the victim of an attack and national authorities or judicial entities to complete formalities related to the terrorist act, either to obtain a right, to testify as a witness or to seek justice.

Victims' associations, based on their experience and knowledge, are able to support victims of terrorism and complement the role of public authorities by helping them navigate the often bureaucratic government procedures, the complex legal and administrative processes and the services required for their recovery and reintegration. Victims often view victims' associations as being more personal and secure, lending a greater sense of comfort to the victim that in turn helps with their recovery.

Through their experience and expertise, victims' associations can thereby provide assistance in a variety of ways, including know-how of entitlement to financial compensation under the State's prevailing rules, linkage to both public and private sources of funding, navigating the usually complex process of filing for such compensation, consultation within the legal or



judicial system, procurement of financial assistance and ongoing consultation for financial matters.

## A. Providing victims with access to social services

In many countries, it continues to remain a challenge for victims to receive proper **social services** to improve their physical and psychological well-being over the short, medium and long term. Besides medical care, housing and food, the breadth of social services required to support and reintegrate a victim spans a range of needs, including psychological support, family counselling, financial guidance, career counselling, job placement and children's education, among others. Often, many victims are unaware of the services they need, what is available or who can inform them.

However, it also remains a challenge for victims' associations to have the means and the ability to comprehensively address victims' needs and to respond to all their demands. Many victims look to these associations to support them in areas where governments have limited resources or fail to deliver. This is a heavy responsibility and should not detract from the responsibility of national authorities.

Informing victims about the different services that are available, whether provided by governmental or non-governmental stakeholders, and in helping victims access these services, has become an integral role for many victims' associations. Information can often be slow from authorities, and victims are often unaware of the myriad support structures in place and do not readily understand which government agency has the lead on a particular service, or who in the agency is the appropriate contact person. Listening to victims and connecting them with the appropriate services is essential to ensure victims' needs are met in a holistic manner.

Victims' associations can guide and assist victims of terrorism to ensure that they receive the necessary services through networking, partnering and working with local authorities, care facilities, social services providers or other civil society organizations that offer social and financial assistance. These actions should be complementary, as strong and efficient partnerships allow for a better response to the range and depth of victims' complex needs. However, victims' associations should be aware of their limits, both financially and technically, so that they are able to respond effectively to victims.

### Box II.A

#### Good practices in providing victims with access to social services

##### **Assess the victims' needs and propose tailored solutions**

Victims' associations should first listen to victims and understand the unique situation of each victim to be able to properly assess their needs to identify the appropriate social services.

##### **Raise professionals' awareness on the complex needs of victims**

Victims' associations should raise awareness of professionals, especially those working in social services, on the complexity of dealing with victims of terrorism and the risks of secondary victimization.

##### **Outreach to meet with vulnerable and/or "forgotten" victims**

Victims' associations that can reach vulnerable or marginalized victims of terrorism should provide

some form of outreach support, whether in terms of raising awareness on available services or by informing public authorities of victims' needs.

##### **Work with the community in contributing to social services**

Victims' associations should play a role in raising awareness on the plight of victims among local populations and communities, calling for solidarity and for practical support in the provision of social services

##### **Network and develop partnerships with key stakeholders in social services**

Victims' associations should network and develop partnerships with key stakeholders to help connect victims to relevant social services or to other organizations that can offer the services required.

Victims' associations are able to provide a crucial role in raising awareness of support structures in place, providing information and guidance, and in some instances offering basic services. They can suggest and encourage communities to offer different kinds of support after a terrorist act has occurred, such as by volunteering professional services, giving blood, donating money or clothes, or offering housing and food. Such contributions greatly aid the limited budgets victims' associations may have and complement the actions of public agencies.

As many victims' associations also work in rural areas and can reach "forgotten" or "invisible" victims, they are often best placed to ensure that victims are informed about existing mechanisms and how to get access to various services. For example, with regards to medical treatment in conflict-affected territories, victims' associations can raise awareness of mobile or roaming clinics and medical teams deployed to reach victims who are unable to access health services. Conversely, civil society organizations can play an important role in informing mobile medical teams about the presence and needs of victims of terrorism who live in hard-to-reach areas.

## **B. Helping victims of terrorism to become financially independent**

One of the main challenges victims of terrorism can face—beyond healing their physical injuries and trauma—is regaining a level of financial stability. While no amount of financial compensation can erase the trauma

and grief victims may suffer, financial aid can be vital in sustaining and supporting victims.

Depending on the degree of trauma and their physical condition, victims of terrorism may require financial assistance over the short, medium and long term. As a terrorist act can result in injuries, the need for long-term medical care that impedes effective work and/or the loss of a job, different forms of compensation are necessary so that victims are financially viable and can focus on their healing process. The lack of adequate compensation can also result in victims suffering long-term psychological effects from the stress of trying to gain financial stability.

Ensuring that victims of terrorism receive financial support also assists their reintegration into society by providing them with the ability to replace lost income due to the disability or death of an earning member of the family.

Being aware they cannot financially assist victims of terrorism over the long term, victims' associations have often implemented pragmatic and creative approaches to help support victims' financial concerns, including by developing public-private partnerships, for example with local communities, national and international donors, and private sector donors. Victims' associations can also support victims to become more economically independent by providing advice and guidance on how to find a job, or create income-generating activities, for example, by partnering with or introducing victims to relevant stakeholders, such as job agencies, or by providing them with practical advice in their job search, such as preparing a CV or writing a cover letter.

### **Box II.B**

#### **Good practices in supporting victims of terrorism to become financially independent**

##### **Partner with relevant stakeholders to help victims become financially independent**

Victims' associations that have a good knowledge of actors such as public agencies, private sector and other civil society organizations, should help connect victims to relevant stakeholders and should provide advice and support where relevant.

##### **Support victims in their professional reintegration**

Victims' associations should raise awareness on the plight of victims and ensure workplaces are sensitive to victims' needs.

##### **Outreach to public and private actors on the necessity to financially assist victims**

Victims' associations should raise awareness of public and private actors and other stakeholders on the importance of providing financial support to victims of terrorism to help them become financially independent.

Partnering with relevant stakeholders is often the best way to secure funds and sustain activities, thereby helping victims regain control over their lives and become economically and financially independent. Raising awareness on the plight of victims can help victims avoid being discriminated against while seeking jobs and by ensuring that employers are sensitive to victims needs in the workplace by establishing and implementing policies that reflect these needs.

### C. Providing assistance for legal and administrative procedures to victims of terrorism

Having to deal with public authorities can be a stressful experience, and navigating through different legal and administrative processes and procedures, particularly on one's own, can be challenging to victims when seeking assistance in the aftermath of a terrorist act. Victims' trauma can be exacerbated if they are given unclear or difficult instructions, have to repeatedly retell their stories, or face a cold and often less-than-responsive bureaucracy.

Many organizations have advocated for a victim-centric approach to legal and administrative procedures, be it for guidance for procuring services or other entitled benefits, which prioritizes the victim's best interests. Victim-centric approaches avoids the dehumanization of relationships and limits traumatization that may arise from bureaucratic and other procedures relevant to victims as they pursue their rights and interests. This approach also puts into context many of the challenges faced by victims as they seek assistance from the State and to employ suitable mitigation measures, making the process more effective and efficient.

Raising awareness, outreach and training are also some of the approaches victims' associations have taken to ensure that national authorities understand and empathize with the unique situation of victims of terrorism, particularly when interacting with national bureaucracies.

Criminal justice systems are largely focused on the prosecution and punishment of perpetrators of terrorist acts. Yet victims, who usually bear the heavy brunt of the act, are often not a visible presence in the criminal justice process. Although they are important actors with rights and a role to play before, during and after the trial, it is often the case that victims play a very minor, if any, role in these processes, and the support

structures established are often not victim-centric.<sup>16</sup> Victims' associations have an important role to play in supporting, guiding and advocating for the right of victims to participate in criminal proceedings.<sup>17</sup> They understand the unique needs and situation of victims and are well-placed to offer practical support and guidance to victims and their families when dealing with public authorities.

Those associations with the necessary skills, resources and expertise should support victims through the criminal justice process, helping victims understand their legal rights and the judicial procedures they will have to face over the short, medium and long term. Victims' expectations in receiving some form of justice are often high as they try and seek answers from a trial. However, criminal procedures can be long, hard, painful and often disappointing. Human rights and victims' associations have an important role in supporting and informing victims about procedures, explaining how the criminal justice system works and keeping the victims informed at all times during all stages of the trial process, allowing them to feel secure and help lessen their anxiety of being involved in daunting legal and administrative procedures.

<sup>16</sup> For more information on assistance to victims of terrorism within the criminal justice framework, see United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), "Good Practices in Supporting Victims of Terrorism within the Criminal Justice Framework", (2015). Available at [www.unodc.org/documents/terrorism/Publications/Good%20practices%20on%20victims/good\\_practices\\_victims\\_E.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/terrorism/Publications/Good%20practices%20on%20victims/good_practices_victims_E.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> See the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power (General Assembly resolution 40/34, annex) and the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law (General Assembly resolution 60/147, annex).

## Box II.C

### Good practices in offering victims of terrorism assistance in various legal and administrative procedures

#### **Ensure legal and administrative procedures are victim-centric**

Victims' associations should advocate for legal and administrative procedures to be more victim-centric and for public authorities, such as law enforcement personnel, magistrates, experts and social workers, to be properly trained to deal with victims of terrorism.

#### **Show professionalism and build mutual trust**

Communication with victims should be honest, using professional, clear and simple language to build mutual trust and establish confidence to help victims make informed choices and to ensure that they are informed of any new developments in a timely manner. Interaction with victims should always be undertaken in a professional and supportive manner.

#### **Prepare victims ahead of time**

Victims' associations should support and guide victims through the criminal justice process, making them aware of the various procedures, both legal and administrative, tempering expectations and keeping victims well-informed about the process before, during and after a trial. This includes any related procedures, such as for obtaining financial compensation, social services, and so on.

#### **Victims' associations help pursue the processes to conclusion**

Victims' associations should be prepared to remain with victims for the duration of any administrative or legal process to offer support and raise awareness on any repercussions on their healing and recovery over the short, medium and long term.

### III. Outreach and advocacy to better promote victims' rights

Public authorities increasingly recognize the role and expertise of civil society in supporting victims of terrorism, often seeing them as constructive and necessary partners in mitigating the impact of terrorism on victims and building peace across societies. As a result, the role of civil society which has increased and encompasses a range of issues, from preventing violent extremism, to supporting, guiding and assisting victims of terrorism in their recovery processes or in the criminal justice system, often requires collaboration with a number of stakeholders and partners.

Victims' associations have therefore had to develop effective strategies and plans to influence public policies, legislation and responses for dealing with the effects of terrorism on victims. By better informing and influencing policymakers and public opinion on the plight of victims and advocating for their rights to be better addressed, Victims' Association can ensure that the responses of public authorities are better tailored to meeting victims' needs. Victim-centric approaches can be incorporated into the programmes, strategies and action plans of national authorities so that more inclusive and effective policies can be established that better promote and defend the rights of victims of terrorism.

Victims' associations can further contribute by holding governments to account, working with them to strengthen care of duty towards victims, and contributing to the promotion of global citizens' awareness. Their interactions with national authorities allows them to understand how the government and public authorities perform against their mandate and responsibilities, thus allowing for greater accountability.

Having this independent advocacy role allows victims' associations to effectively communicate with the government to help develop better policy on and benefits for victims. By advocating for policy change, victims' associations galvanize support for needed governmental regulation or change to protect the rights and interests of the victims.

Advocacy and outreach also strengthens the ability of civil society and governments to work to further victims' rights and interests. A well-thought-out and effective advocacy and outreach strategy applied in a non-partisan apolitical manner is critical to better support and promote victims' rights and can contribute to the States' effectiveness towards victims while furthering the collaborative relationship between the victims' associations and the public authorities.

Victims' defenders need to start with manageable objectives and remain focused when they establish a civil society organization, which will allow them to sustain their actions, demonstrate their credibility and achieve bigger goals over time. The credibility of victims' associations is also reinforced when the organization makes public any monitoring and evaluation processes, thus promoting transparency and accountability. These processes also have the benefit of strengthening the credibility of the victims' associations with donors, reinforcing trust, and increasing the possibility of raising more funds. This, in turn, boosts the ability of the victims' associations to provide ongoing efforts to support the rights and needs of victims of terrorism.

Advocacy is also conducted through a "bottom-up" approach where victims' associations are able to provide an additional and effective channel into and out of communities due to their positioning, where they can raise public awareness, disseminate information and bring messages and information to national authorities that can help shape and guide national policy on victims.

This can be an especially important conduit for vulnerable and/or marginalized groups, who may suffer from stigmatization that may arise from sexual violence, or those targeted for their gender, religious beliefs and ethnicity, whose only voice is that of the victims' association, which understands their needs and unique situation.

By engaging with other victims and civil society networks, victims' associations are also able to help other non-governmental organizations representing victims of terrorism develop lessons learned and good practices, strengthen collaboration and help apply effective strategies and methods to better protect victims.

## A. Participating in policymaking to better promote victims' rights

National authorities tend to place their focus, and often their resources, on victims in the immediate aftermath of a terrorist act. First responders are on the scene, investigations have started and policies and legislation are either established or enacted. At this point, attention and solidarity for victims is at its highest. Yet, often victims feel marginalized and discriminated against as time passes, and attention is shifted elsewhere. This is challenging and harmful for victims whose needs often require long-term support. Victims' associations are thus in a unique position to raise awareness on the needs of victims and influence policymaking of national authorities in the short, medium and long term so that victims' needs are met in a holistic manner.

This role has increasingly become pivotal as terrorism transcends borders, victims are multinational and have different needs at different stages in their rehabilitation. As a result, it is essential to promote national legislation that better addresses the specific needs of victims of terrorism and to advocate for victim-centric approaches. Victims' associations have a critical role to play in all these areas, for example, in advocating for the reform of the legal framework, advocating and lobbying for the rights of victims, ensuring that essential services cater to victims' needs and that national policies and subsequent responses focus on the best interests of victims.

However, before engaging in or advocating for policy change, victims' associations must ensure that their organizations have the relevant mandates, resources and skills to advocate for victims' needs. Only then can victims' associations be recognized as relevant and important stakeholders in any dialogue with public authorities, be able to build sustainable relations with national authorities and be involved in consultative mechanisms and influence policy in the making.

Victims' associations should ensure that their outreach and advocacy is not too broad and that effective policy change comes only with strong experience and good

interaction and dialogue with authorities. Experience in an area of policy ensures that victims' associations are credible messengers who effectively convey the interests of victims. A well-thought-out, proactive and comprehensive advocacy strategy (wherever possible formulated in advance of a terrorist act) is critical to better support and promote victims' rights and requires short-, medium- and long-term perspectives.

Victims' associations therefore can play a crucial role in reforming the wide range of national policies and processes related to victims of terrorism through advocacy and raising awareness on the rights of victims. Because of their knowledge, skills and experience of victims needs and interests, victims' associations have the ability to be key focal points in relations with national authorities and regional and/or international organizations. Yet, to be considered by public authorities as constructive partners, civil society organizations supporting victims must clearly signal the advantages of jointly collaborating with the government to better protect and support victims of terrorism.

In contexts where the tradition of dialogue between the State and civil society is limited, victims' associations can show the benefits of partnering with national authorities, noting that their work is often complementary to the services offered by the State. Countries in context of fragility, in crisis or in post-conflict situations, require a specific strategy and approach. Engaging with official authorities in sensitive contexts can be difficult and delicate to ensure victims' interests remain at the heart of a country's counter-terrorism policies. In order to be heard and listened to, civil society organizations should identify and understand who the relevant and legitimate decision makers are at the local and/or the national levels and act accordingly with a pragmatic mindset.

By advocating for inclusive, holistic and participatory approaches when engaging in consultative mechanisms with public authorities, victims' associations highlight the "win-win" partnership that results from this and which has allowed them greater flexibility in better representing the interests of the victims.



## Box III.A

### Good practices in participating in policymaking to better promote victims' rights

#### **Set long-term and sustainable vision and goals**

Victims' associations should demonstrate a long-term and credible vision to support victims of terrorism and develop well-informed goals that are sustainable and impactful. When establishing a new civil society organization, victims and human rights defenders need to start small and remain focused and be able to sustain their actions over the medium and long term.

#### **Gain credibility by showing expertise and professionalism and by implementing inclusive, participatory and transparent processes**

Victims' associations should demonstrate their credibility by showing expertise and professionalism and should provide adapted and tailored support to victims that complements governments efforts or strengthens gaps in the system through participatory and accountable processes.

#### **Build an effective and sustainable advocacy strategy**

Victims' associations should develop credible, transparent and accountable advocacy strategies

that have dedicated timelines and identifiable actions and objections that are relevant to their mandates and missions, while ensuring that victims' interests remain at the heart of all actions.

#### **Be engaged in policy processes while remaining neutral in delivering services to victims of terrorism**

Victims' associations should engage in policy processes without politicizing their actions. Civil society organizations supporting victims must be independent, professional and multidisciplinary actors who work effectively in coordination with key stakeholders to ensure the best interests of the victim are met.

#### **Implement monitoring and evaluation processes**

Victims' associations should implement effective monitoring and evaluation processes to evaluate the results of their actions and promote transparency and accountability to strengthen their credibility with policymakers and other key stakeholders.

## B. Raising public awareness of the plight of victims of terrorism

Public awareness of victims of terrorism tends to be at its highest in the immediate aftermath of an attack. However, as the attack slowly recedes and other events take over, public attention often becomes focused on other issues. It remains a challenge for victims' issues to remain high on the public agenda and to ensure that consistent support is provided to victims by the State.

This difficulty in remaining high in the public's conscious requires well-articulated, effective communication strategies to ensure that greater attention is given to victims of terrorism while utilizing all approaches, including conventional and social media

Victims' associations have played a key role in raising public attention on the plight of victims. Advocacy is important to ensure the victims voices are heard worldwide and their specific contexts are understood. By ensuring continued and sustained focus on victims, victims' associations have not only contributed to and influenced policy change, but have also become

a platform for victims themselves to speak out and ensure that their rights and interests are heard.<sup>18</sup> Such communications can bring increased awareness, appreciation and resources from a range of individuals, communities and societies at large.

In all communications, victims' associations should promote positive messages and universal values, such as empathy, dignity, resilience and tolerance without denying the difficulties victims of terrorism face or creating anxiety and fear among the public. Communication must be about what connects people, not what separates them. There is no hierarchy of suffering and victims should be treated equally with a focus on their needs. Communication should be done on a "do no harm" principle.

Therefore, developing effective communication strategies on victims of terrorism needs to be thought out, sensitive, well-structured with timelines, objectives and sustainable outcomes. The most powerful form of awareness raising is to hear victims' voices at the local,

<sup>18</sup> See chapter 4 below.

national and international level. Listening to people who have had first-hand experience of the consequences of a terrorist act is very powerful, giving a human face to the effects of terrorism. However, involving victims in this approach should not be abused or lead to retraumatization. Support should be offered at each stage of the communication process, with a particular emphasis on avoiding the over-exposure of victims and/or harmful and inappropriate coverage.

It is also common for victims' associations to have a communication strategy to raise awareness on more immediate emergency requirements, such as in the aftermath of a terrorist act, as well as for longer-term goals, such as promoting and advancing victims' rights or engaging in counter-narrative strategies. These strategies should also identify relevant stakeholders, decision makers and service providers, as relevant, in both the public and private sectors, and the method and means of coordinating and "activating" them in the event of an emergency or for the long-term provision of services.

Social media has also allowed victims' associations to focus on advocating for and raising awareness on the "invisible" or "forgotten" victims that live in unstable, fragile and

conflict-affected regions.<sup>19</sup> By increasing attention on victims who are marginalized, victims' associations play a critical role in ensuring that no victim is forgotten.

Raising public awareness by commemorating and remembering victims of terrorism not only greatly contributes to the healing process and draws communities together by underlining the values societies and nations stand for, but also keeps the issue of victims of terrorism in the public eye. Such commemorative events by victims' associations and/or national authorities provide the opportunity to publicly acknowledge the experiences of victims, to honour them, and to show solidarity. However, if these events are incorporated into any communication strategy, they should never be used for political means, but should be neutral, non-partisan and show full solidarity and support to victims.

<sup>19</sup> Some well-publicized terrorist acts have contributed to raising public awareness of the plight of victims of terrorism across the world, especially victims of sexual violence perpetrated by terrorist groups. Sometimes, these campaigns, such as the #bringbackourgirls campaign in Nigeria, have led to demonstrations of sympathy and solidarity.

### Box III.B

#### Good practices in raising public awareness on the plight of victims of terrorism

##### **Be professional when communicating with the public**

Victims' associations should know and understand the target audience, work with the relevant media channels on tailored messages and understand the effects and results of all media coverage when developing any outreach or communication strategy. They should target the messages according to the appropriate context, timing and content, while recognizing the risks and benefits of engaging with the media.

##### **Implement a participatory approach with victims**

Victims' associations should raise public awareness and support victims in telling their own narratives that emphasizes authenticity, credibility and honesty of message.

##### **Build and share a positive message connecting people around common values**

Victims' associations should develop and share positive messages that connect people around common values such as empathy, dignity, resilience and solidarity, while considering the victims' difficulties and suffering.

##### **Keep the memories of victims of terrorism alive and express solidarity with victims**

Commemorative acts of remembrance are important to show solidarity and ensure victims memories are not forgotten. Commemorative acts should be done in a collaborative manner with a variety of stakeholders, including victims, public authorities and civil society organizations.

##### **Establish strategies both for emergency contexts as well as for the long term**

Victims' associations, if relevant, should have well-developed strategies both for emergency contexts as well as for the longer term. These strategies should identify the relevant stakeholders and service providers in both the public and private sector and how they will be activated and coordinated in the event of an emergency or for the long-term provision of services.

##### **Advocate for the "invisible" victims**

Victims' associations should be a voice for vulnerable and/or marginalized victims, advocating for their specific rights and needs.



## C. Building national, regional and international networks of victims' associations

Engaging in national, regional and international networks can help victims' associations share lessons learned, strengthen support to other organizations and adapt good practices to other national experiences and contexts. Strong regional and international networks of victims' associations can also help strengthen the voices of victims and raise awareness on the plight of victims on a broader level.

Engaging in building networks of victims' associations, however, can present different challenges. For example, security concerns when connecting victims with each other, language, limited resources and a lack of understanding of different methodologies employed by various organizations. Victims' associations can overcome these challenges by showing professionalism, building trust with their beneficiaries, peers, and donors and interacting in a transparent and accountable manner.

Working with other civil society organizations and policymakers can also enable victims' associations to highlight shortcomings or violations in national responses to victims and work to promote efforts to bring about positive change in their country. A climate of mutual trust helps victims' associations be recognized as credible partners in advancing and promoting victims' rights, and strong cooperation helps strengthen the capacity of victims' associations to increase the impact of their actions.

Strengthening resilience by encouraging dialogue between victims worldwide is an important and positive outcome in connecting victims of terrorism both at the national and international level. As a result, victims from different regions or various parts of the world feel less isolated, share a common experience and return home with tools and experiences to better help them serve themselves and their communities. Programmes that bring together victims from different areas have also contributed to peacebuilding by fostering tolerance.

### Box III.C

#### Good practices in building national, regional and international networks of victims' associations

##### **Engage in national, regional and international networks of victims' associations to share good practices and experiences**

Victims' associations should be encouraged to initiate, engage and network nationally, regionally and internationally to strengthen cooperation, exchange experiences, identify and develop good practices and adapt them to their local context.

##### **Strengthen visibility of victims' associations**

Victims' associations should develop networks and promote their organizations with local, national,

regional and international partners to help raise awareness on victims, share good practices and maintain visibility.

##### **Link victims together to build and strengthen individual and collective resilience**

Victims' associations should connect victims at the local, national, regional and international level through intercultural dialogue, tolerance and peacebuilding to build and strengthen individual and collective resilience.

## IV. Raising victims' voices in preventing violent extremism

Over the past decade, the United Nations has recognized the important role of victims of terrorism in **preventing violent extremism**. The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy,<sup>20</sup> adopted by the General Assembly in 2006, is a unique global instrument that enhances Member States' efforts to counter terrorism at the national, regional and international levels. It recognizes, through Pillar I and Pillar IV, the importance of and the need for Member States to support victims of terrorism. A decade later, the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism,<sup>21</sup> adopted by the General Assembly in 2016, sought to engage victims of violent extremism in the process to prevent violent extremism in three recommendations, namely:

- Provide medical, psychosocial and legal service support in communities that give shelter to victims of violent extremists, including victims of sexual and gender-based crimes;
- 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;
- Launch a global awareness campaign to support victims of violent extremism and provide them with a global platform within which to share their stories by expanding the Victims of Terrorism Support Portal.<sup>22</sup>

Victims of terrorism have credible, and authentic voices to add to the counter-narrative debate, from policy formulation to prevention and intervention. By sharing their own stories and unique experiences, victims give a human face to the effects of terrorism and through their voices bring forward alternative narratives to those used by terrorists and violent extremists. As efforts by Member States to stop terrorism and prevent violent extremism continue using both soft and hard approaches, it becomes even more important that alternate, credible and powerful voices highlight

messages that counter those of terrorists and violent extremists.

However, victims of terrorism should not feel alone or isolated when engaging in preventing violent extremism. Victims' associations play a valuable role in ensuring that the best interests of victims who wish to engage in preventing violent extremism are protected. By raising victims' awareness of the realities of engaging in activities to prevent violent extremism, victims' associations provide a support structure that helps victims understand the risk to their psychological and social well-being, as well as the risks of being manipulated and instrumentalized by other actors. Victims' associations can minimize this risk by implementing the "do no harm" principle, being sensitive to victims' needs, establishing appropriate support structures and understanding the political environment in which they operate.

### A. Criteria for victims' associations to engage in strategies for preventing violent extremism

Protecting the interests and the rights of victims should always be a priority when engaging in activities to prevent violent extremism. Victims must be aware of the psychological impact when engaging in such activities and of any security conditions that may prevail when undertaking such engagements.

Therefore, coordination is essential when implementing counter-narrative strategies. Partnering, networking and creating synergies with public authorities, other civil society organizations, the private sector and the media (conventional or social) at the local, national, regional and international levels all strengthen the impact of these actions.

To engage in effective counter-narrative strategies, victims' associations need a conducive environment in which to operate. This can include an enabling legal system to promote their initiatives, secure access to funding and information, the right to participate in policymaking and the necessary space to ensure victims' fundamental rights—such as the rights to freedom of expression—their security and privacy are protected. When these conditions are not met, victims' associations can advocate to strengthen the national legal framework and ensure that victims' rights are fully guaranteed.

<sup>20</sup> General Assembly resolution 60/288.

<sup>21</sup> See A/70/674.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., paras. 51 (d), 55 (e) and 58 (i).

Victims' associations should be independent, professional and multidisciplinary actors who are able to respect and assist victims at each stage of their engagement. It is essential that victims' associations invest in long-term follow-up with victims, regardless of how long victims engage in preventing violent extremism. If a victim wishes to stop his or her engagement, victims' associations should not only respect that decision but also provide support for "disengagement", if necessary. Victims should never be considered as "tools" or instruments in the fight against terrorism or be used to further a political agenda.

Instrumentalization of victims, therefore, is a real risk. Armed groups can exploit victims' grievances to generate fear and intimidate and threaten social cohesion, and some government use the threat of terrorism to justify restrictive legislation and influence votes. Even if they are unaware of it, victims can be manipulated by malicious

groups that want to use their suffering to promote political causes or ideologies.

Victims' associations are placed in the unique position of being able to offer support services and advice to uphold the best interests and prevent any political manipulation of victims. By developing and implementing safeguards to detect and avoid instrumentalization of victims, victims' associations play a fundamental role in providing information and support to them in ways that public institutions often cannot. They are in a unique position to provide victims with proper resources to make well-informed decisions. Civil society organizations, therefore, play an important role in developing, maintaining and promoting victim-centric initiatives, in which effective and sustainable strategies can be developed in the best interests of the victims to support those who want to be involved in preventing violent extremism.

#### Box IV.A

### Good practices for victims' associations to engage in strategies to prevent violent extremism

#### **Show independence and professionalism**

Victims' associations should be independent, professional and multidisciplinary actors who should work effectively in coordination with public and private key stakeholders to ensure victims have adequate support before embarking on activities to prevent violent extremism in the short, medium and long term. Victims should have a focal point in the association to whom each victim can refer.

#### **Demonstrate respect for and ensure fair treatment of victims**

Victims' associations should represent all victims who ask for their support and should not discriminate. They should guarantee fair treatment for all and provide a supportive environment in which all victims have equal rights and are afforded equal consideration.

#### **Build alliances, synergies, networks and partnerships with key stakeholders**

Victims' associations should collaborate with key partners and stakeholders to provide resources and support to victims who embark on activities to prevent violent extremism and ensure strong coordination between public authorities, other civil society organizations, the private sector and the media to reinforce the impact of counter-narratives strategies.

#### **Detect and avoid instrumentalization of victims**

Victims' associations need to understand the risks and the dangers of instrumentalizing victims of terrorism, and sensitize, support and protect victims from any group that may exploit their suffering to generate fear and build on grievances.

## B. Securing victims' rights when engaging in activities to prevent violent extremism

Engaging in counter-narrative debates can compromise the security and privacy of victims. Victims can face a variety of threats as they tell their stories and share their experiences, particularly if they are visible through the media. Maintaining the privacy of victim who engage in activities to prevent violent extremism is essential to protect their rights. To minimize the risks, victims must always be informed of the possible consequences of engaging in such activities. This means understanding what their engagement implies in terms of security, privacy and confidentiality. They need to understand the challenges they will face and the impact their engagement can have on their personal lives and on those of others, including their families, friends, peers and other victims.

Special attention and care should be given to women and girls, especially if they are victims of sexual violence, to avoid any reprisals, stigmatization and rejection if they speak publicly.

Where the security context is sensitive, the means of communication should be carefully analysed. Victims' associations should support victims in choosing the right media to communicate their story. A determination of the appropriate medium of communication should be made after understanding such factors as the message content, the target audience and, most importantly, the security requirements for the victim, along with the implication of any compromise of security or confidentiality.

Some victims may prefer to record their testimonies so their messages can be shared online and thereby maintain a distance from their audiences. Other victims may prefer telling their stories live and interacting with audiences. The choice of the media will eventually

depend on the victims' personalities, their desire and ability to communicate publicly or not and the risks involved.

Communicating through social media can be an option, but, depending on the platform, it does not necessarily provide the anonymity that some victims might prefer to have. Many social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, are not anonymous, and there is always the danger of "doxxing", which refers to the practice of using the Internet to collect an individual's personal and private information and then publicly releasing it online. In some contexts, maintaining the victim's anonymity is highly preferable to avoid subsequent identification of the victim and any resultant reprisals. If something goes wrong, appropriate measures for the victim's security should be taken and a debrief should be expediently organized with the victim to understand what happened, and to avoid similar situations from occurring in the future.

Victims' associations must be aware that to many journalists, a victim's story is just that: a story. Rights, such as privacy, confidentiality and security may not be a top priority for journalists. Victims should always be informed about how to interact with the media and what to expect from such interaction. Safeguards should ideally be put in place to avoid retraumatization or violation of a victim's rights.

Civil society organizations engaged in activities to prevent violent extremism must establish safeguards to ensure victims' fundamental rights are protected while supporting them to raise their voices, especially in difficult and/or sensitive contexts. In such contexts, it is desirable to conduct risk assessments before engaging in counter-narrative strategies so as not to compromise the victims' security. Mutual trust with victims can be developed through a variety of means, including information sessions, training, and support. If legal support can be provided, it can help victims to fully understand their rights and make prudent decisions.

## Box IV.B

### Good practices in securing victims' rights when engaging in activities to prevent violent extremism

#### **Inform victims about security and privacy issues before they engage in activities to prevent violent extremism**

Victims' associations should inform victims about the effects and challenges of being involved in activities to prevent violent extremism from a security point of view, and, if appropriate, also from a legal standpoint before engaging in such activities. Victims should also be aware of the risks involved in engaging in activities to prevent violent extremism and undertake them only with their explicit and informed consent. Victims' associations should provide as much information as possible about the consequences that their involvement can have on their family, friends, community, and other victims.

#### **Respect victims' privacy while engaging in activities to prevent violent extremism**

Victims' associations should demonstrate professionalism and expertise while engaging in

preventing violent extremism by helping victims frame their narratives in a way that respects their own and others' privacy. Victims' associations should provide a clear risk analysis so as to make appropriate decisions about securing victims' rights.

#### **Promote mutual trust**

Victims' associations should be able to guarantee victims' confidentiality and privacy and build meaningful, ethical and appropriate relationships with different interlocutors and stakeholders engaging with victims to help secure their rights.

#### **Support all aspect of victims' engagements to optimize security**

Victims' associations need to understand the security environment in which they operate. They should understand both the terms of engagement and the use of communication channels and any resulting adverse effects to properly inform and advise victims about preventing violent extremism.

## C. Ensuring victims' well-being remains at heart of strategies to prevent violent extremism

Approaches to engage victims in activities to prevent violent extremism must be victim-centric. Victims must agree and understand the consequences on their well-being when engaging in such activities. Victims' associations must ensure the physical and psychological health of victims remains at the heart of any counter-narrative framework with the underlying principle that "you cannot save the world if you don't save yourself first."

Retelling personal experiences can often lead to retraumatization, revictimization and stigmatization. Victims' associations must ensure that victims are prepared to tell their stories publicly and fully understand the consequences and risks of "going public". Some victims have engaged in activities to prevent violent extremism without receiving adequate support beforehand, often envisaging their engagement as part of the healing process. This approach can

often do more harm than good, and result in further psychological trauma and confused messaging that can blur the impact and the effectiveness of their message.

Engaging in activities to prevent violent extremism can be challenging and intense and therefore requires victims to first and foremost address and deal with their own trauma. Victims' associations should engage with victims in preventing violent extremism only once victims feel that they are properly healed and are able to effectively give voice to their experiences. Victims' associations must recognize when engaging in preventing violent extremism is too overwhelming and support victims in withdrawing or taking a break. Victims must always be in control of their own engagement.

Recognition from society and communities is essential for victims' voices to be respected and their messages to be heard. Being denied this status can be very traumatic for victims and result in re-victimization. Women and girls who have been raped and/or exploited by terrorist groups can be, in some cultural contexts, stigmatized and rejected by their communities when speaking publicly about their experiences. Some victims

may even live in denial and refuse to engage in any form of activity to prevent violent extremism as the subject can be taboo. Victims' associations must ensure that victims are provided with the space, recognition and support to avoid revictimization from occurring. This is especially true when victims confront at-risk audiences, show signs that they are putting their well-being aside or deal with trauma or incidents that might arise from public discussion of their experience.

By putting in place support services, victims' associations can help to avoid retraumatization of victims. Safeguards must be established to ensure that certain groups of victims, for example youth and victims of conflict-related sexual violence, are well prepared and do not suffer further.

#### Box IV.C

#### Good practices in ensuring victims' well-being remains at heart of strategies to prevent violent extremism

##### **Constantly be mindful of victims' best interests**

As victims' interests must be at the heart of any involvement in activities to prevent violent extremism, victims' associations should ensure that victims are ready to engage in such activities, and take appropriate action throughout the process. Victims' associations should be able to detect signs of revictimization, fragility or burn-out and take appropriate action.

##### **Offer professional support throughout the process**

Proper preparation and individual support should be offered to victims at all stages in the process. Victims' associations should have in place support services to avoid the retraumatization of victims engaging in activities to prevent violent extremism, and safeguards

should be established particularly for youth and victims of conflict-related sexual violence. Victims' associations should consider offering counselling and psychological support after any public intervention. Children should never be involved in activities to prevent violent extremism.

##### **Ensure gender equality and protect vulnerable and marginalized groups from stigmatization**

Victims' associations should ensure equality between women and men and recognize that girls and women, and boys and men have specific needs. Victims' associations should be mindful of the specific needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups and should ensure their safe participation in all activities to prevent violent extremism.

## D. Developing effective counter-narrative strategies

Victims of terrorism are uniquely placed to highlight the impact of terrorism on individuals, families and communities. They are credible messengers; they give a face to the effects of terrorism; they are well placed to communicate alternative narratives; and they are critical and important voices in preventing violent extremism and in condemning violent methods used by terrorist groups. Victims can effectively promote inclusive and alternative narratives and messages that create positive stories around social values, tolerance and participation and that speak to their communities, peer groups and others who may be at risk of recruitment by violent extremists.

Communicating on sensitive issues is challenging, and requires well-thought-out and effective strategies to ensure that victims' messages are heard and reach as broad an audience as possible. Identifying the target audience is one of the key principles of an effective communication strategy. Audiences, and therefore messages, will vary depending on the context: for example, messaging to the general public will be different from messaging focused on youth, an at-risk audience or marginalized groups. Each audience requires a specific and tailored communication strategy.

Victims' associations should provide support and guidance to victims in developing and implementing their communication strategies so that they can better communicate their messages. Narratives should be tailored to each individual as each victim's message and experience are unique and very personal.



When framing the message, a clear distinction should be made between the methodology and the ideology. Victims of terrorism should avoid engaging in ideological debates with the audience. Rather, in telling their personal stories or conveying key messages, victims should emphasize authenticity, credibility and honesty. By highlighting the impact of terrorism, they condemn the methodology used by terrorist groups and show that violence is never a solution. The political and social motivations of violence should not play a role in the victims' narratives although their story can play a role in fighting for victims' rights.

Victims should be informed about all the options available to them in terms of media. Choosing the right media outlet to communicate their story is essential not only in protecting their rights, but also in their preference on how to communicate their experiences. Victims' associations can provide guidance on the various approaches that can be taken, for example, recording testimonies for online usage to storytelling with a live audience, but they must always be mindful to support victims and engage them if and when they are ready. Civil society organizations engaged in activities to prevent violent extremism must avoid the "overuse" of victims.

#### Box IV.D

##### Good practices in developing efficient counter-narrative strategies

###### **Implement a participatory approach with victims**

Victims' associations should support and guide victims to take control of their own narratives and to emphasize authenticity, credibility and honesty of messages. Narratives should be tailored to each individual and his or her preferred platform, and at all times any approach must place the best interests of the victim at the forefront.

###### **Show professionalism when using the media**

Victims' associations engaged in activities to prevent violent extremism should know the audience, have good working relationships with relevant partners, set realistic goals, be ready to engage in the long-term process and know how to interact with the

media, including social media. Guidance, support and assistance should be offered to each victim before, during and after each engagement and support should be provided at each stage of the process.

###### **Avoid engaging in ideological debates with the audience**

When framing the message, victims' associations should make a clear distinction between the methodology of terrorists and their ideology. The role of victims is not to engage in ideological debates but rather to condemn the violence and show the consequences that arise as a result. Messages should be constructed in such a way as to highlight common values.

# Glossary

**Compensation** should be provided for any economically assessable damage, as appropriate and proportional to the gravity of the violation and the circumstances of each case, resulting from gross violations of international human rights law and serious violations of international humanitarian law, such as (a) physical or mental harm; (b) lost opportunities, including employment, education and social benefits; (c) material damages and loss of earnings, including loss of earning potential; (d) moral damage; (e) costs required for legal or expert assistance, medicine and medical services, and psychological and social services.<sup>23</sup>

**Gender-sensitive approach:** one that seeks to design and implement projects, programmes and policies that attempt to redress existing gender inequalities.

**Guarantees of non-repetition** should include, where applicable, any or all of the following measures, which will also contribute to prevention: (a) ensuring effective civilian control of military and security forces; (b) ensuring that all civilian and military proceedings abide by international standards of due process, fairness and impartiality; (c) strengthening the independence of the judiciary; (d) protecting persons in the legal, medical and health-care professions, the media and other related professions, and human rights defenders; (e) providing, on a priority and continued basis, human rights and international humanitarian law education to all sectors of society and training for law enforcement officials as well as military and security forces; (f) promoting the observance of codes of conduct and ethical norms, in particular international standards, by public servants, including law enforcement, correctional, media, medical, psychological, social service and military personnel, as well as by economic enterprises; (g) promoting mechanisms for preventing and monitoring social conflicts and their resolution; and (h) reviewing and reforming laws contributing to or allowing gross violations of international human rights law and serious violations of international humanitarian law.<sup>24</sup>

**Rehabilitation** should include medical and psychological care as well as legal and social services.<sup>25</sup>

**Restitution** should, whenever possible, restore the victim to the original situation before the gross violations of international human rights law or serious violations of international humanitarian law occurred. Restitution includes, as appropriate: restoration of liberty, enjoyment of human rights, identity, family life and citizenship, return to one's place of residence, restoration of employment and return of property.<sup>26</sup>

**Retraumatization:** a reminder of a past trauma. A victim of terrorism who is suffering from retraumatization will re-experience the initial trauma at any time.

**Satisfaction** should include, where applicable, any or all of the following: (a) effective measures aimed at the cessation of continuing violations; (b) verification of the facts and full and public disclosure of the truth to the extent that such disclosure does not cause further harm or threaten the safety and interests of the victim, the victim's relatives, witnesses or persons who have intervened to assist the victim or prevent the occurrence of further violations; (c) the search for the whereabouts of the disappeared, for the identities of the children abducted and for the bodies of those killed, and assistance in the recovery, identification and reburial of the bodies in accordance with the expressed or presumed wish of the victims, or the cultural practices of the families and communities; (d) an official declaration or a judicial decision restoring the dignity, the reputation and the rights of the victim and of persons closely connected with the victim; (e) public apology, including acknowledgement of the facts and acceptance of responsibility; (f) judicial and administrative sanctions against persons liable for the violations; (g) commemorations and tributes to the victims; and (h) inclusion of an accurate account of the violations that occurred in international human rights law and international humanitarian law training and in educational material at all levels.

**Revictimization or secondary victimization** is defined as victimization that occurs not as a direct result of a terrorist act but through the responses (or lack thereof) of society and institutions to the victim.

**Social services** refer to the different welfare programmes (such as medical care, education and housing) offered to individuals and families by State and non-State actors.

<sup>23</sup> General Assembly resolution 60/147, annex, para. 20.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., para. 23.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., para. 23.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., para. 19.



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**Stigmatization** is defined as the rejection of an individual or a community because of their differences (either physical, sexual, racial, etc.), their beliefs or any other quality of which the dominant group disapproves.

**Trauma:** the emotional response to a challenging and unexpected event, such as an accident, an attack or a terrorist act. People suffering from trauma can develop symptoms such as sleep loss, depression, anxiety, feelings of intense guilt, outbursts of intense anger and emotional numbness.

**Victim-centric approach:** one that focus on the needs and concerns of a victim to ensure that his or her fundamental rights prevail over any other consideration. A victim-centric approach seeks to avoid retraumatization of victims.

**Violent extremism:** “use or support of violence”; the “willingness” to use violence; committing, advocating or encouraging acts of violence; promoting views which foment and incite violence in furtherance of particular beliefs, and foster hatred that could lead to inter-community violence. Violent extremism is generally conceived as being aimed at achieving political, ideological or religious goals, or as the means employed by groups that reject democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Some definitions explicitly note that radical views are by no means a problem in themselves, but that they become a threat to national security when such views are put into violent action. In other cases, definitions employed do not make fully clear whether violent extremism presupposes violent action or inciting violent action, or whether lesser forms of conduct that do not normally trigger criminal law sanctions would also be included.

