



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

Statement of Mr. Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General Standing in Solidarity for the Rights of Victim of Terrorism

26 June 2018

Dear colleagues and friends,

Thank you for coming.

I am glad to welcome you to the first side event of the United Nations “Counter-Terrorism Week”.

It is an honor to have our special guests here today, who have flown in from across the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With the military defeat of Da’esh in Iraq and Syria, the terrorist threat has continued to evolve, requiring a truly multilateral effort at the global, regional and national level.

Sadly, as the threat becomes both more complex and more diffuse, more and more innocent people are killed and injured, more families are damaged and more communities and societies are torn apart.

I would like to take this moment to stand here in solidarity with **all** victims of terrorism for a minute of silence. Our thoughts and prayers are with the injured and with the families of those who have been lost.

[Stand for one minute of silence: Denise will time and signal you when 60 seconds has elapsed].

Thank You.

While we are appalled at the heinous terrorist acts, we must applaud the bravery of victims who speak out against these atrocities.

Listening to victims’ voices remains essential in our efforts to defeat terrorism. I try to meet with victims of terrorism wherever I travel.

What I have learned from these meetings is that victims are powerful and credible messengers. Their tragic experiences put a human face to the consequences of terrorism and teach us not to lose our humanity.

But we must not only listen to victims' voices. We must also work towards protecting their rights and supporting their needs.

The Secretary-General has urged us to stand in *solidarity* with victims, to be *united* in our efforts to protect their rights, and recognize the pivotal *role* they can play in preventing terrorism and violent extremism.

Recently, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, the capacity-building arm of the Office of Counter-Terrorism launched a multi-million dollar Victims of Terrorism Programme that builds on the Secretary-General's core aims of unity, solidarity and collaboration with victims.

We will stand in solidarity with victims, raise awareness on their needs and work toward the fulfillment of their rights. This will be achieved through practical activities, such as:

- (i) building the capacity of victims to put forward counter narratives to those of violent extremists,
- (ii) strengthening mechanisms to provide practical resources to victims, through the UN Victims of Terrorism Support Portal,
- (iii) and building the capacity of victims associations and Member States to better support and assist victims of terrorism.

This evening's event seeks to start fulfilling these aims.

I am committed that the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, through this Victims Programme, will continue to provide practical, pragmatic and realistic support to victims. And I promise that we will continue to make victims our priority.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Tonight, you will view a documentary on Mali. This is the second in a series of documentaries, produced in collaboration with the UN Department of Public Information, on victims of terrorism. The series aims to provide a platform for victims' voices.

I would like to thank the Permanent Mission of Mali for their strong support in making this documentary. During my visit to Mali in December 2017, I met with victims and victims' associations in Bamako and Timbuktu, and witnessed the devastation caused by terrorists to individuals.

I salute the people of Mali for their resilience and for leading the way to show that truth and justice can be attained. These are not philosophical principles. The documentary shows that there are concrete steps that can be taken to end impunity, allowing everyone to see that

accountability is possible. We need to ensure that there is no escape for terrorists and they are brought to justice.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are also here to launch the Handbook of Good Practices to Support Victims Associations in Africa and the Middle East, prepared in collaboration with different victim's societies.

It is our hope that the Handbook will provide victims associations with additional knowledge, tools and skills.

The Handbook is a culmination of four expert group meetings throughout 2017 and a validation conference in January 2018, that developed good practices in four main areas:

- (i) on prevention of violent extremism;
- (ii) financial and non-financial forms of compensation;
- (iii) outreach and advocacy; and
- (iv) resilience at the community and individual level.

The Handbook is a testament to the fact no matter our different experiences and perspectives, we can all work together and arrive at a set of good practices to support victims from different geographical regions.

The Handbook can be found on the UN Victims of Terrorism Support Portal, a resource and information hub for victims of terrorism, and will be distributed with the collaboration of victims associations across Africa and the Middle East.

The interactive roundtable discussion on the Handbook will provide us with an opportunity to hear how these good practices can provide comprehensive support to help victims associations.

I wish you a fruitful discussion. Thank you.