



General Assembly

Distr.: General
8 April 2020

Original: English

Seventy-fourth session

Agenda item 118

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

Progress made by the United Nations system in supporting Member States in assisting victims of terrorism

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution [73/305](#), requested the Secretary-General to submit a report at its seventy-fourth session on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution, including an evaluation of the existing United Nations activities regarding victims of terrorism, with a focus on detailed options, including for a voluntarily funded comprehensive programme to support Member States in assisting victims of terrorism through national systems. The present report builds on the report of the Secretary-General on the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism ([A/73/599](#)), which was mandated in Assembly resolution [72/165](#).

2. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations system in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, terrorism has become one of the most serious challenges to sustaining peace, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and realizing universal human rights. It threatens the hard-earned gains made by many Member States and locks others in a vicious cycle of destabilization and forced displacement ([A/74/677](#), para. 2).

3. Ordinary civilians continue to be killed and injured as a result of attacks within a national territory and across borders, affecting multiple nationalities and causing destruction and displacement. Women and girls are often targeted directly by terrorist groups and subjected to gender-based violence, including human trafficking, rape and forced prostitution, as well as marriage or pregnancy. In resolution [2331 \(2016\)](#), the Security Council affirmed that victims of sexual violence and trafficking in persons committed by terrorist groups should be classified as victims of terrorism.

4. In section II of the present report, the progress of existing United Nations activities related to victims of terrorism is charted and evaluated in three key areas: (a) supporting the rights and addressing the needs of victims of terrorism, (b) the delivery of United Nations capacity-building assistance to requesting Member States and (c) recognition, advocacy for and raising awareness of victims' issues. In



section III, options are presented for a voluntary funded comprehensive programme to support Member States in assisting victims of terrorism through national systems. In section IV, observations and recommendations to Member States are provided.

II. Progress made by United Nations entities and Member States in the implementation of the enhancement of international cooperation to assist victims of terrorism

5. Member States have the primary responsibility for implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, contained in General Assembly resolution [60/288](#), including those provisions related to upholding the rights of and providing needed support to victims of terrorism. Over the years, many Member States have made significant efforts to strengthen their activities to support such victims. Noteworthy strides have been made to recognize the rights and needs of victims of terrorism, and such efforts were accelerated following the adoption, by consensus, of resolution [72/284](#), the sixth resolution to include a comprehensive review of the Strategy. The Secretariat has received submissions from 29 Member States and one regional organization (see annex I to the present report) on their activities to implement the Strategy, which are available from the Office of Counter-Terrorism of the United Nations upon request. The Secretariat has also received feedback from 55 civil society organizations on their efforts to address issues related to countering and preventing terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism, including by providing support to victims of terrorism. The submissions also included recommendations on how the United Nations system could support the efforts of Member States to implement the Strategy.

6. Many entities of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact have also focused on supporting victims of terrorism. In particular, the Working Group on Promoting and Protecting Human Rights and the Rule of Law while Countering Terrorism and Supporting Victims of Terrorism, part of the Global Compact,¹ has a mandate to support the efforts of Member States to promote and protect the rights of victims of terrorism, drawing from pillars I and IV of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The Secretariat has received contributions from 16 members of the Working Group, listed in annex II, for the present report.

A. Supporting the rights and needs of victims of terrorism

7. Victims of terrorism require dedicated and targeted support to ensure that their physical, medical and psychosocial needs are met, their human rights are recognized and protected and their access to justice and compensation is guaranteed. They also require assistance to overcome challenges to the fulfilment of those rights and needs that they may face, including a lack of resources, constraints on obtaining access to available services, difficulties posed by cross-border attacks and not being recognized as a victim of terrorism. The importance of addressing the needs of victims, including women and girls, has been recognized by the Security Council and the General Assembly, including in resolutions [2242 \(2015\)](#) and [2467 \(2019\)](#).

8. While there is no agreed on international definition of the term “victim of terrorism”, the United Nations carries out its work in accordance with international

¹ The Working Group, which comprises 21 members and 3 observers, is chaired by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, with the Office of Counter-Terrorism of the United Nations as its Vice-Chair.

human rights and humanitarian frameworks, as well as the 19 counter-terrorism treaties and conventions. Victims of terrorism should be free from discrimination on any basis, including that of race, colour, gender, age, language, religion, nationality, political or other opinion, cultural beliefs or practices, property, birth or family status, ethnic or social origin, disability and sexual orientation. Special attention should be paid to addressing the specific immediate, short-term and long-term needs of victims of terrorism. Recognizing that such victims are not a homogenous group, age- and gender-sensitive assistance and support should always be provided on the basis of the harm that they have suffered and should include humanitarian assistance, recognition, acknowledgement (see para. 19 below), respect, reparation, compensation, effective remedy, protection and access to justice.

9. Preserving the memory of and commemorating victims of terrorism or amplifying survivors' voices can play an important role in countering terrorist narratives by revealing the human face of their heinous acts and promoting peaceful alternatives. Victims should have the opportunity to play a decisive role in efforts to counter violent extremism conducive to terrorism by making their voices heard, if they wish to do so.

10. Member States are responsible for protecting their citizens from terrorism. However, when an attack does occur, its indiscriminate nature can fracture citizens' sense of security, leaving victims, the wider community and society with a sense of enduring vulnerability and terror. In some cases, victims are unable to leave areas controlled by terrorist groups, which can expose them to stigmatization or unfair association or affiliation with the terrorist groups, which can result in additional trauma. Victims of terrorism have a broad range of needs, including for physical, medical and psychosocial support, and may require immediate as well as long-term rehabilitation to address trauma and build resilience. In countries where conflict is ongoing, victims of terrorism may also require humanitarian assistance and protection.

11. Guided by humanitarian principles, United Nations humanitarian agencies working in conflict settings support affected populations to ensure access to all civilians in need, irrespective of their perceived status or affiliation. They provide medical care, food, shelter and assistance with longer-term rehabilitation.

12. With the reform of the counter-terrorism architecture, since 2017, the United Nations has focused increasingly on the rights and needs of victims of terrorism. In June 2018, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, in the Office of Counter-Terrorism, launched its global Victims of Terrorism Support Programme. The Support Programme is aimed at showing solidarity with, raising awareness of and contributing to the protection, promotion and respect of the rights and needs of victims of terrorism, as well as increasing the capacity of Member States and civil society organizations to assist and support victims through a wide range of activities. The Support Programme has included strengthening victims' networks, peer-to-peer engagement, toolkits, handbooks, media training sessions, advocacy and outreach, documentaries and multimedia products, including for social media and the Victims of Terrorism Support Portal. Since its launch, the Support Programme has convened round tables and other meetings with and for victims, victims support groups and Member States to advocate for the rights and needs of victims. It has also led the commemorative events of the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism since its establishment in 2018 through General Assembly resolution [72/165](#).

13. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) provides assistance to Member States in strengthening law enforcement and criminal justice responses to support victims of terrorism, including through awareness-raising and the promotion

of evidence-based polices and good practices; policy and legislative assistance; specialized training, guidance and practical tools and resources; the provision of mentoring and advisory assistance; and support for strengthened coordination of and cooperation on supporting victims of terrorism at the national, regional and international levels.

14. The Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism has continued to advocate for the human rights of victims through reports, country visits and substantive engagement with governments on the protection and status of victims under domestic law. During country visits to Belgium, France and Kazakhstan,² in 2019, the Special Rapporteur underscored that victims of terrorism and their families have the human right to an effective remedy with corresponding State obligations, including the duty to exclude any possibility of impunity for acts of terrorism.

15. The Special Rapporteur also issued a thematic report to the Human Rights Council at its fortieth session (A/HRC/40/52), in March 2019, in which the impact of counter-terrorism measures on civil society was addressed, highlighting the important role of victims' organizations and support networks. Victims' associations and civil society organizations advocating for victims' rights should be able to operate in an open civic space without fear of reprisal.

16. The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate has advocated for the rights of victims of terrorism, in particular the need to address their humanitarian requirements. The Directorate has consistently raised with Member States, including during its visits conducted on behalf of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, the question of their programmes and policies to support victims, including victim and witness protection measures taken in the context of prosecutions, as well as compensation and rehabilitation programmes.

1. Supporting the rights and needs of women who are victims of terrorism

17. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by conflict and terrorism. In resolution 2242 (2015), the Security Council recognized the impact of terrorism and violent extremism that could be conducive to terrorism on the human rights of women and girls, including in the context of their health, education and participation in public life, and the importance of implementing the women and peace and security agenda as a cross-cutting priority in addressing threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.

18. In Security Council resolutions 2331 (2016), 2388 (2017) and 2467 (2019), among others, conflict-related sexual violence has been recognized as a tactic of terrorism, and a survivor-centred approach in the prevention of and response to conflict-related sexual violence has been called for. Terrorist groups disproportionately target women and girls through acts of gender-based violence, in particular sexual violence, as a means of achieving tactical, strategic and ideological aims. Women who are victims of terrorism continue to face discrimination and stigmatization when attempting to obtain access to justice and seek remedies, often leading to re-traumatization and secondary victimization.

19. Under the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power (General Assembly resolution 40/34, annex), and as underlined in

² For the visit to Belgium, see [A/HRC/40/52/Add.5](#); for the visit to France, see [A/HRC/40/52/Add.4](#); and for the visit to Kazakhstan, see [A/HRC/43/46/Add.1](#).

other United Nations reports and resolutions,³ being responsive to and addressing the needs of victims during criminal justice processes includes taking into account gender and age considerations. Provisions should be made for women with children born as a result of conflict-related sexual violence, including measures to prevent their stigmatization. Acknowledging victims of terrorism in criminal proceedings, as well as publicly reinforcing the human costs of terrorism, are important parts of recognizing the humanity of the victims. Other ways of recognizing victims' humanity include ensuring that appropriate measures are taken to protect their safety, physical and psychological well-being, dignity and privacy. Such practices are key to effectively protecting victims of terrorism, including victims of sexual and gender-based violence, and recognizing their needs and rights. The ability of victims to participate in criminal proceedings without fear of intimidation or reprisal is essential to maintaining the rule of law and strengthening the ability of States to bring terrorists to justice.

20. The United Nations has taken a number of steps to address the needs of women who are victims of terrorism. For example, in the *Handbook on Gender Dimensions of Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism*, a UNODC publication, the importance of integrating a gender perspective into all aspects of the criminal justice process – including gender-sensitive interviewing and the provision of protection and support to victims of terrorism, as well as regarding the accountability of terrorist groups for acts of sexual and gender-based violence – is reinforced. In addition, together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, UNODC launched the *Nigeria Training Module on Gender Dimensions of Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism* on 2 December 2019.

21. United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict seeks to unite the work of the United Nations system with the goal of ending sexual violence in conflict. Under that framework, the United Nations Children's Fund, the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Population Fund have worked to ensure that survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, including children born as a result of rape and those perceived to be associated with Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), receive specialized services, including in Afghanistan and Iraq. The Spotlight Initiative, launched jointly by the United Nations and the European Union in January 2018, is aimed at ending all forms of violence against women and girls. Through it, the importance of taking a victim-centred approach to preventing violence, as well as of providing services to survivors and reforming the criminal justice system, continues to be reinforced. In 2019, under the Initiative, the United Nations launched 14 new programmes in the Caribbean, Central Asia and the Pacific to complement those already in existence in Africa and Latin America.

22. On 30 October 2019, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict launched the Global Survivors Fund for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. Through The Fund is based on the fact that conflict-related sexual violence is used systematically to terrorize individuals and entire communities, promotes a survivor perspective and is aimed at fostering partnerships with front-line service providers, donors, private sector entities, governments and survivors to help local communities to design solutions and provide survivors with access to reparations. In March and July 2019, respectively, the Special Representative signed joint communiqués on the prevention of sexual violence with

³ Including in the report of the Secretary-General on the effects of terrorism on the enjoyment of human rights (A/73/347), Human Rights Council resolution 35/34 and the report of the Special Rapporteur to the Human Rights Council on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, under the Framework principles for securing the human rights of victims (A/HRC/20/14).

the Governments of Mali and Somalia, which recognized the importance of women's participation in combating terrorism; supporting legislative and policy reform to strengthen protection from sexual violence; strengthening accountability; providing services, livelihood support and reparations for survivors and children born as a result of rape; and engaging with tribal and religious leaders on the prevention of sexual violence.

2. Supporting the rights and needs of children who are victims of terrorism

23. Some children have been victims of or witnesses to terrorist acts, are related to members of terrorist groups or are otherwise associated with such groups. Children and young people who are affected by terrorist acts require focused, specialized and individual support to address their needs in the short, medium and long term because they perceive violence and death differently than do adults and are often more vulnerable to the effects of terrorist acts. Terrorist groups have recruited thousands of children, including through the Internet. They have used children as suicide attackers, human shields and in various supporting roles within their groups. Children have been taken by their families and forced to travel, sometimes under misleading circumstances, in particular to conflict-affected areas in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic.

24. In Security Council resolution [2427 \(2018\)](#), it is stated that children who have been recruited by armed groups should be treated primarily as victims of violations of international law. In the key principles for the protection, repatriation, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of women and children with links to United Nations-listed terrorist groups, issued by the United Nations in 2019, it is specifically stated that children should be treated first and foremost as victims, underlining that any measures taken must be in the best interests of the child. That principle applies in particular to children who have been recruited and exploited by terrorist groups, given the methods and tactics used by those groups to ensure child involvement in terrorism-related acts or offences. Such tactics include child grooming, the provision of financial or other material incentives and forced recruitment. Children have special rights and protections that apply in all situations, irrespective of the child's age, gender or other status, including actual or perceived family or personal affiliation. Therefore, children have to be provided with adequate care and support, pursuant to resolution [2427 \(2018\)](#), in which the importance of providing reintegration and rehabilitation assistance and access to health care, psychosocial support and education to affected children is recognized.

25. The United Nations has been working on developing clear guidelines for Member States on how to respect, protect and uphold the rights of children associated with foreign terrorist fighters. The guidelines have been included in reports, briefs and handbooks, including the OHCHR publication "Guidance to States on human rights-compliant responses to the threat posed by foreign fighters"; the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate's analytical briefs to the Committee on the repatriation of women and children associated with ISIL; the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism ([A/HRC/40/28](#)); the UNODC publication *Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System*; and three training tools, respectively, on prevention; rehabilitation and reintegration; and justice processes and responses. The *Handbook* is complemented by the UNODC publication "Roadmap on the Treatment of Children Associated with Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups". In 2019, the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre launched the handbook entitled *Children affected by the foreign-fighter phenomenon: Ensuring a child rights-based approach*. In all of the above-mentioned

publications, as well as in capacity-building tools, it is stated that, most importantly, children should be treated as victims and that the primary considerations must be their effective rehabilitation and reintegration into society, their protection and their best interests, in accordance with applicable international law, in particular the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

26. Since 2018, UNODC has conducted 10 regional capacity-building activities on the recruitment and rehabilitation of children, as well as child justice, in a counter-terrorism context for Member States in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. UNODC has also provided specialized assistance to the Governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, the Niger, Nigeria and Uzbekistan on meeting the specific needs of victims with particular vulnerabilities related to gender or age, through awareness-raising, strengthened policies, legislation and the increased capacity of criminal justice and protection actors.

27. The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, through its monitoring and reporting mechanism, provides data on grave violations committed against children, such as their recruitment and use by armed forces and armed groups, including those designated by the Security Council as terrorist groups, in situations of armed conflict. In October 2019, the Special Representative signed with the Minister of Defence a road map on strengthening the protection of children in armed conflict in Somalia. The road map is aimed at expediting the implementation of an action plan signed in 2012 to end and prevent the recruitment, use, killing and maiming of children by government security forces. The Special Representative and the Minister of Defence also launched a peacebuilding fund to prevent child recruitment and support the identification and community-based reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups.

B. Capacity-building delivery and technical assistance

28. Strengthening the efforts of Member States to better support victims of terrorism has been a key priority for the United Nations system. In General Assembly resolution [73/305](#), the Office of Counter-Terrorism and UNODC were called upon to build the capacity of Member States to assist victims, including by providing technical assistance. As a result, the United Nations has provided capacity-building assistance to Member States at the international, regional and national levels in order to increase support for victims of terrorism, including through activities ranging from ensuring that they have access to justice to providing assistance in the development of counter-terrorism strategies.

29. In the report of the Secretary-General on the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism ([A/70/674](#)), it was recommended that national plans of action be multidisciplinary, include input from a wide range of government actors, including civil society, and promote respect for the principle of equality before the law and equal protection under the law, including by strengthening national legal frameworks, providing access to justice and engaging with communities.

30. The Office of Counter-Terrorism has sought to implement such an approach through the global policy assistance programme of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre with regard to preventing and countering violent extremism conducive to terrorism. The programme is aimed at ensuring that the rights and needs of victims are more firmly centred in the efforts of Member States towards preventing and countering violent extremism, which have included promoting the role of victims in national action plans and strategies. Through support for coherent policy guidance on the development of regional and national plans and strategies for preventing and

countering violent extremism, the programme has included activities that strengthen efforts to support victims of terrorism. For example, through the programme, training has been provided in victim protection measures to build the capacity of law enforcement officials, and initiatives have been promoted to strengthen the voices of victims through strategic training in communication. The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre showcased a victim-centred approach to preventing and countering violent extremism as a recommended good practice at the second workshop of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf for the Network of Countering Violent Extremism Centres, held in Riyadh in October 2019. The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre replicated that approach as a recommended good practice at the meeting of the Countering Violent Extremism Working Group of the Global Counterterrorism Forum, held in Montreal, Canada, in November 2019.

31. Similarly, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has supported the development and implementation of national action plans for preventing and countering violent extremism in 20 countries: Benin, Central African Republic, Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Philippines, Somalia, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania. In the action plans, victims' rights, including the right to remedy and other civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, are promoted, protected and respected.

32. Through the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech of June 2019, measures that strengthen support for all victims, including through advocacy for remedies, access to justice and psychological counselling, have been promoted.

33. A key element of the Victims of Terrorism Support Programme of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre is its focus on providing capacity-building assistance to Member States, victims and victims' associations to strengthen their support for victims of terrorism in order to ensure the full realization of their human rights. For that purpose, the Support Programme has produced two handbooks for victims' associations and relevant civil society organizations to better support victims in key areas, such as assistance for victims of terrorism, protection of their rights, collaboration between civil society and Member States to assist and protect victims and participation of victims in decision-making processes and preventive measures. In June 2018, the Centre launched the "Handbook of Good Practices to Support Victims' Associations in Africa and the Middle East", and in 2020 it will launch a book of principles and guidelines for civil society organizations to assist, protect and support victims of terrorism in the Asia-Pacific region.

34. UNODC is developing a resource entitled "From Victims of Terrorism to Messengers for Peace: A Strategic Approach" as a tool for policymakers, practitioners and civil society actors, in particular victims' associations, to strengthen the resilience of victims of terrorism and mobilize their messages as part of broader whole-of-government, whole-of-society efforts towards preventing and countering violent extremism, targeting terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism. UNODC has also established networks for preventing and countering violent extremism in Central, South and South-East Asia to further build on such efforts.

35. Other capacity-building initiatives have been centred on strengthening the criminal justice response of Member States to victims of terrorism. In order to deliver justice for victims, interventions in support of the rights of victims are being developed, guided by the character of the crime. United Nations agencies have worked with Member States to strengthen their accountability mechanisms by building the capacity of justice and security institutions, consistent with their international law obligations, including human rights obligations, to establish effective and accountable national criminal justice systems, including prosecuting

terrorist crimes, putting in place witness and victim protection mechanisms and promoting dialogues between justice and security institutions.

36. The United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) has put the experiences and needs of survivors of ISIL crimes, and the families of its victims, firmly at the centre of its mission. UNITAD supports efforts in Iraq to ensure that members of Da'esh/ISIL are held accountable for acts that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. In August 2019, UNITAD and the Government of Iraq facilitated the provision of victims' testimonies before a court in a third country, after which three more Member States have also requested similar assistance.

37. Other United Nations entities have also provided specialized assistance to further support the efforts of Member States. For example, the International Criminal Police Organization has provided specialized teams to assist national law enforcement in responding to incidents through its Incident Response Team and has worked in Kenya following the Riverside Drive complex attack in Nairobi on 15 January 2019 and in Colombo in the aftermath of the Sri Lanka terrorist attacks on 21 April 2019.

C. Recognition, advocacy and public awareness

38. Since the sixth review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, developments at the international, regional and national level have demonstrated support for victims and moved beyond symbolic solidarity towards a more robust engagement to advance the rights and address the needs of victims. This is reflected in the two recent General Assembly milestone resolutions dedicated to victims of terrorism and the establishment of the Member State-driven Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism. The establishment of the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism (resolution [72/165](#)) on 21 August signifies the solidarity of the international community with victims. Resolution [73/305](#), in which Member State commitments to victims are emphasized, in particular through a call for the development of comprehensive assistance plans to support victims of terrorism, goes further.

39. During the first Ministerial meeting of the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism, co-hosted by the Chairs of the Group, Afghanistan and Spain, and the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre on 24 September 2019. The Group's plan of action for 2020 was adopted, including support for the first Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism, originally scheduled to be held at United Nations Headquarters in June 2020, but postponed owing to coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

40. The United Nations system has increased its focus on supporting victims of terrorism through conferences, events and multimedia products, including social media. A number of United Nations entities have also used multimedia, in particular documentaries, as an effective way to focus on and lift up victims' voices. That is the case for the Office of Counter-Terrorism, with its Victims of Terrorism documentary series, and UNDP, with its #ExtremeLives initiative, which continues to produce videos on the human stories of people affected by terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism in Asia, including victims.

41. 41. The Victims of Terrorism Support Portal, a broad-based, multilingual site, facilitates access to resources and information for victims and their families and communities. It has a key multimedia component that streams documentaries, including the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre guest interview series, with victims and experts, and social media and campaigning products. Launched in June 2014, the Portal recorded 568,499 page views as at 31 December 2019. In 2019, there

were 126,738 page views, an 81 per cent increase from 2018. A spike in views was registered in 2019, following terrorist attacks in Afghanistan, Nepal, New Zealand and Sri Lanka. Viewing numbers peaked during the events to commemorate the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism from 20 to 22 August 2019.

42. The Under-Secretary-General of the Office of Counter-Terrorism has continued to raise the importance of the role of victims, participated in commemorations of and events dedicated to victims of terrorism and made a concerted effort to meet with victims of terrorism both in New York and abroad, including those from Afghanistan, France, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, the Philippines and Spain. During his meeting in New York on 3 June 2019 with youth victims from around the world, the Under-Secretary-General noted the importance of their messages and how their experiences and ideas contributed to the development of policies and projects on victims.

43. Throughout 2019, the Office of Counter-Terrorism, in particular through its Counter-Terrorism Centre, continued to advocate for and raise awareness of victims' diverse needs and to participate in expert seminars, international conferences and round-table discussions, including in Belgium, France, Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In November 2019, the Office hosted a brown-bag discussion in New York with NATAL – the Israel Trauma and Resiliency Center, on the context-specific approach to resolving trauma and building resilience. The Office also participated in the eighth International Congress for Victims of Terrorism, held in Nice, France, in November 2019. The Office's photo exhibition, entitled "Surviving Terrorism: The Power of Resilience", was also featured at the Congress. On 3 December 2019, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre co-hosted, along with the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism, a presentation on the International Commission of Jurists publication entitled "Human Rights of Victims of Terrorism: A Compilation of Selected International Sources", followed by a discussion with the Special Rapporteur.

44. The International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism remains a key milestone that enables the international community to stand in solidarity with victims and advocate for and raise awareness of their rights and needs. To underline the importance of hearing victims' voices and recognize and understand how their experiences can help to build resilience, the United Nations organized the following events, which was focused on resilience to commemorate the International Day in 2019:

(a) On 20 August, the documentary entitled *Resilience in the Face of Terrorism: Victims' Voices from Cameroon and Nigeria* was launched, followed by a round-table discussion with victims of terrorism from Australia, Germany and the United States of America. More than 60 participants attended the event.

(b) On 21 August, the Secretary-General launched in New York the photo exhibition entitled "Surviving Terrorism: The Power of Resilience", together with the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism and victims of terrorism from Canada, Kenya and the United Kingdom. More than 220 participants, including 60 permanent missions, civil society organizations and victims' associations, attended. The event was live-streamed by United Nations Web TV and is featured on the United Nations Victims of Terrorism Support Portal. The photographic exhibition featured the resilience of victims from 20 countries. In Vienna, UNODC, together with the Co-Chairs of the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism, and Nigeria commemorated the International Day with survivors of the Bataclan and Utøya island terror attacks.

(c) On 22 August, an event was organized at United Nations Headquarters with victims from Argentina, Indonesia, Kenya, the United Kingdom and the United

States, and more than 40 participants from Member States, civil society and survivors of terrorist attacks. Discussions were focused on how best to support victims' needs in the short term and the long term. To raise global awareness of the International Day, the Office of Counter-Terrorism, in collaboration with the Department of Global Communications, developed a social media campaign using the hashtag #Surviving Terrorism, video messages, social media messaging, a virtual photo exhibition, video clips and a documentary film. The campaign was used globally by United Nations offices, United Nations peacekeeping missions, United Nations information centres and Member States that used the hashtag to develop their own messages or Twitter campaign. The hashtag reached more than 15 million social media accounts, and a total of 1,500 tweets was generated.

(d) The United Nations News Centre produced a series of video stories in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Kiswahili, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish, featuring victims of terrorism. Media organizations around the world, including in Australia, Belgium, China, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Kuwait and Nigeria, published articles on the International Day.

(e) The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei and the United Nations Office at Geneva held dedicated events to commemorate the International Day. The Office also supported the activities of its civil society network, which commemorated the International Day in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and North America and disseminated the link to the virtual exhibition.

III. Options for funding mechanisms to support the rights and needs of victims

45. In General Assembly resolution [73/305](#), the importance of systems of assistance to address the needs of victims of terrorism and their families and promote and protect their rights is recognized. The resolution requested detailed options to be presented whereby voluntarily funded comprehensive programmes, developed through national assistance plans, could be established through a funding mechanism to support Member States' assistance to victims of terrorism. The goals of any such programme would be twofold: first, to strengthen the delivery of United Nations counter-terrorism capacity-building assistance to requesting Member States to assist and support victims of terrorism; and second, to provide assistance to Member States to develop comprehensive assistance plans that would include legal, medical, psychosocial, material and other assistance.

46. Based on consultations including with the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism, United Nations entities and the Working Group on Promoting and Protecting Human Rights and the Rule of Law while Countering Terrorism and Supporting the Victims of Terrorism, the following three possible options are could be explored. The options all have well-established precedents in the system and range in complexity owing to the nature and approach of the programme that would be developed and any activity that could be implemented. Other considerations to take into account are focused on how quickly and expeditiously any structures and processes can be established and how efficiently they will work. The three options are presented as guidance as to what can be initially developed and how they can be utilized, if required, at applicable stages as the programme develops.

47. First, a victims of terrorism sub-fund within the existing United Nations trust fund for counter-terrorism could be established. The trust fund provides financial

support for the Office of Counter-Terrorism activities in line with its mandate and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 71/291. The terms of reference of such a sub-fund would be within the existing terms and conditions of the United Nations trust fund. The sub-fund would enable the establishment of an updated and reinforced Victims of Terrorism Programme, reflecting the agreed need for a comprehensive victims' programme to support Member States. An updated programme of work would be drafted in consultation with key stakeholders, including the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Compact Working Group on Promoting and Protecting Human Rights and the Rule of Law while Countering Terrorism and Supporting Victims of Terrorism and other relevant Compact working groups, donors and beneficiary Member States, victims and civil society organizations. The sub-fund could immediately start receiving contributions, allowing for the quick implementation of programmatic activities to requesting Member States by United Nations and non-United Nations implementing partners. This mechanism can be established immediately with no associated set-up costs.

48. Second, a new and separate United Nations trust fund for victims of terrorism could be established. This mechanism would require the development of terms of reference and the establishment of applicable administrative structures. Programmatic output would depend on reaching the necessary target amounts within a specific period of time in order to start programmatic activities and cover associated costs. The option would require a wider consultative process with stakeholders, in particular Member States, and thus more time to be established than the first option.

49. Third, the Office of Counter-Terrorism, in collaboration with UNDP, could establish a multi-partner trust fund, through the UNDP multi-partner trust fund office of the United Nations, to implement the programme. The option would establish a United Nations inter-agency mechanism for pooled contributions and multi-entity funding, whose programmatic work would be reported on an annual basis. Based outside the United Nations Secretariat system, the multi-partner trust fund office would act as the trustee or administrative agent, assist with the fund's design, develop its terms of reference, administer the funds and consolidate and post reports on all of its activities through the gateway website of the multi-partner trust fund office. A steering committee would be established to decide upon the strategic direction of the fund, approve all funding allocations and provide oversight on the fund's operations. Setting up a multi-partner trust fund would require an initial funding pledge of \$5 million by donors. Within the first year of the launch, a comprehensive gender-sensitive victims' programme and a long-term donor mobilization strategy would have to be developed.

50. Each of the three funding mechanisms entails its own structural and administrative complexity, reporting requirements and required funding levels. Each mechanism requires a different level of coordination and collaboration by United Nations entities, Member States, civil society and other partners in order to ensure the successful implementation of a victims' programme. Each funding mechanism will have an impact on how expeditiously the programme can be implemented and how the programme will not only interact with key partners and stakeholders but also greatly impact and benefit victims throughout the world.

IV. Concluding observations and recommendations

51. In the past few years, important and specific steps have been taken by the international community to uphold the rights of victims. I am grateful for the indispensable backing of Member States for United Nations actions to focus on victims as key in all our efforts to prevent and counter terrorism and violent

extremism conducive to terrorism. Many of the recommendations in my report on the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism have been implemented. The United Nations System has convened meetings to discuss the rights of victims and has also developed tools to support both Member States and civil society in their efforts to protect victims. The United Nations system has also undertaken capacity-building efforts and has stood in solidarity with victims by establishing a dedicated International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism. All of these actions and the progress in United Nations engagement to support the needs and uphold the rights of victims of terrorism are a culmination of hard work, advocacy and outreach. However, as I noted in the above-mentioned report, pursuant to General Assembly resolution [72/165](#), there needs to be better and more sustained coordination and coherence to support victims. Member States may wish to enhance their cooperation with victims and other stakeholders, including civil society organizations, to exchange expertise, collect data, identify gaps and solutions and share good practices.

52. The establishment of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact working groups has attempted to address the imbalance in focus of the four pillars of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, of which pillar IV remains the least developed pillar. The newly revitalized Global Compact Working Group on the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights and the Rule of Law while Countering Terrorism and the Support to Victims of Terrorism has tried to ensure that a wider and more diverse number of entities is engaged in assisting victims of terrorism. As a result, the Global Compact Working Group has been able to increase the number of activities on victims under its work plan. This has, to some extent, ensured consistent system-wide efforts when working with and for victims. However, the lack of dedicated and sustainable funds specifically earmarked to victims of terrorism means that many of these efforts continue to remain ad hoc rather than strategic, long-term and sustainable in nature.

53. The Office of Counter-Terrorism has sought to strengthen such coherence through the Victims of Terrorism Support Programme of its United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre. The Office also maintains the Victims of Terrorism Support Portal, which has become an important mechanism for both victims and the wider community to seek out information and resources on and for victims. I urge Member States to continue to support the Portal through timely and relevant contributions and sustained funding. Since its establishment, victims have used the information provided by Member States to the Portal to understand the direction and action that their national Governments have undertaken to support them. This has proved to be an invaluable resource that can only stay relevant and useful when based on current and accurate information.

54. At the same time, it remains important that to continue to address the conditions conducive to, and understand the drivers of, terrorism and violent extremism. I urge that any actions to support victims – be they whether terrorism takes place in a conflict or a non-conflicted affected area, be based on the following key elements:

(a) All measures taken for the enforcement of the rights of victims shall be in compliance with Member States' obligations under international law, including international human rights law, international humanitarian law and international refugee law, as well as international standards and relevant Security Council resolutions;

(b) Victims of terrorism have to be treated with compassion and respect for their dignity, privacy and family life, which have to be based on the overall principle of “do no harm”, which seeks to uphold their rights, dignity and well-being;

(c) Gender-sensitive responses to victims' needs are required for the short, medium and long term, with access to effective, rapid and appropriate assistance, including legal, medical, psychosocial, material and spiritual assistance and support, understanding that these needs are interlinked;

(d) Any response has to pursue a rights-based, survivor-centred approach, that is gender- and age-sensitive and includes non-discrimination and equal treatment.

55. Member States may also wish to consider these four elements when developing their own comprehensive assistance plans for victims of terrorism, that promote the best interests of all victims, including the rights and needs of women, men, girls and boys, and are based on the perspectives of victims and victims' advocates. In this regard, Member States may wish to consider how they can work with the United Nations to further strengthen these programmes, based on the three funding options in section III of the present report. These options detail funding mechanisms that could be utilized to strengthen the delivery of United Nations capacity-building and technical assistance to requesting Member States in the development of their national assistance plans. Although all three options have merits and challenges, an expanded victims of terrorism programme, as detailed under the first option, would ensure immediate assistance and support to Member States within an already existing structure.

56. The establishment of the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism and recent General Assembly resolutions on the issue of victims of terrorism are milestones that will strengthen the international community's ability to work in a concerted, sustained and collaborative manner in the best interest of all victims of terrorism. In this context, the United Nations continues to stand ready to assist requesting Member States.

57. As Member States continue to focus on the rights and needs of victims of terrorism at the international level, it is also important to focus on assisting victims at the national level. The development by each Member State of a national comprehensive assistance plan would be a major step towards establishing sustainable national institutions and mechanisms that could effectively fulfil the rights and needs of victims of terrorism, particularly when they seek access to and remedy of their legal, social, economic and medical challenges. Such efforts would benefit from being complemented by an all-of-society approach, including the involvement of civil society organizations, particularly victims' advocate groups and associations. Civil society is uniquely placed to understand the needs and interests of victims of terrorism and to raise victims' concerns. Victims' associations can play a key role in facilitation, advocacy and collaboration with and between victims and national government actors.

58. Member States may also wish to consider developing national legislation that specifically addresses the rights, interests and needs of victims of terrorism, over the short to long term, including recognizing the respective experiences and needs of victims who are women, men, girls and boys, and ensuring that victims and their families are provided with comprehensive gender-sensitive support and assistance. The gap between Member States' commitments to victims of terrorism and the effective implementation of such commitments at the national level needs to be narrowed. National practices are wide and varied and Member States may wish to seek out model legislation, good practices and lessons learned from those jurisdictions that have effectively implemented practices and legislation that benefit victims of terrorism. The United Nations continues to stand ready to support Member States in this regard, including through the development of model legislation.

59. 61. Promoting and protecting the rights and supporting the needs of civilian populations, including women and children, remains a paramount but often

overlooked consideration. Tailored, gender-sensitive and age-appropriate services and support to all victims of terrorism are required. Women and children who are victims of terrorism need special protection at all stages of the criminal justice system and need to be protected at all stages of the investigation and subsequent proceedings, especially with regard to the giving of testimony as witnesses during criminal proceedings.

60. The first United Nations Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism, originally scheduled for 30 June 2020, during the second Counter-Terrorism Week held by the United Nations, but postponed (see para. 39 above), was aimed at facilitating the exchange of good practices, programmes and policies in support of victims. The Global Victims Congress will promote genuine listening, dialogue and interaction between Member States, victims, victims' associations, civil society organizations, experts and academics on upholding the rights and supporting the needs of victims of terrorism. It will be aimed at building on and consolidating the international community's efforts to support the rights and needs of victims of terrorism and to translate those efforts into practical and sustainable gender-responsive actions at the national level.

Annex I

Supplementary information: submissions received by the Secretariat from Member States and regional organizations

The Secretariat has received information from the European Union and the following 29 Member States concerning their activities to implement the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which is available to Member States, upon their request, from the Office of Counter-Terrorism of the United Nations: Albania, Algeria, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, China, Colombia, Egypt, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Morocco, Philippines, Russian Federation, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey.

Annex II

Supplementary information: activities of United Nations entities in support of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

Entities of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact actively work to promote the balanced implementation of the four pillars of the United Nations Global Counter Terrorism Strategy by Member States. The Secretariat received information from the following 16 entities for the preparation of the present report: the Office of Counter-Terrorism of the United Nations and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre; the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the United Nations Development Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, the Office of Legal Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Mine Action Service, the International Criminal Police Organization and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs.
