



UN GLOBAL CONGRESS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM

Advancing the rights & needs of victims of terrorism

PRESS RELEASE

Victims of Terrorism at the Center of a Global Congress at the UN Headquarters

New York, 8 September 2022 – The first [United Nations Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism](#), organized by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), started today in New York under the theme of “Advancing the Rights and Needs of Victims of Terrorism”. The Global Congress brings together more than 600 in-person participants, including 85 victims of terrorism from 25 countries across the globe. The event is the world's largest and most diverse gathering of victims of terrorism, Member States, civil society, experts, academics and the private sector and a critical first milestone towards strengthened global solidarity and international unity in support of victims of terrorism.

Aimed at advancing dialogue and engagement on a victim-centric approach to countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism conducive to terrorism, the Global Congress High-Level opening session held in the United Nations General Assembly Hall began with a poignant call to action by ten victims and survivors of terrorism from around the world.

This call to action was followed by a High-Level Parliamentary Session during which representatives of national assemblies emphasized the need to develop, strengthen and tailor domestic legislation to respond to the complex needs of victims. They also highlighted the importance of having the rights of victims of terrorism clearly recognized in national legislation, in line with international human rights frameworks.

Addressing the audience, **H.E. Mr. Abdulla Shahid, President of the 76th General Assembly** said *“It is our duty, not only as members of an international organization, but as fellow human beings, to stand in solidarity with the victims of terrorism. We must raise awareness of their needs, and do our utmost to guarantee the protection, promotion and respect of their rights”*.

“Solidarity and support for victims of terrorism is a moral obligation and a humanitarian and human rights imperative. But let’s be clear: today’s Congress is not only to benefit victims. It is an essential part of our efforts to prevent and end terrorism everywhere. Amplifying the voices and views of victims and survivors is the ultimate demonstration that the terrorists will never prevail”, said the **Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Amina J. Mohammed** in her keynote address.



Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, the Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism, stressed that *“The Global Congress is our chance to take away the narrative from terrorists and violent extremists and return it to victims and survivors. (...) This is the start of a common journey of solidarity and action to protect, promote and fulfil the rights of victims.”*

The **Minister of Interior of the Kingdom of Spain, H.E. Mr. Fernando Grande-Marlaska**, delivering remarks in his capacity as co-chair of the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism, noted that Spain is living proof that democratic values and the rule of law can defeat terrorism. He stressed the need of memorialization and remembrance for victims of terrorism, as they symbolize the global fight for peace and freedom in the face of the scourge of terrorism.

For his part, the **National Security Advisor of the Republic of Iraq, H.E. Mr Qassim al-Araji**, also in his capacity of co-chair of the Group of Friends, reaffirmed Iraq’s strong commitment to victims of terrorism, noting the important of the first Global Congress to build on international efforts in support of victims. Mr al-Araji called for the international community to ensure that the needs of victims are met, their human rights recognized and protected, and their right to access to justice and redress mechanisms, fully respected.

Following the High-Level opening session, the Congress will continue its work through six interactive thematic sessions spread throughout the two days that are expected to yield clear and concrete recommendations for action at all levels. The themes of the sessions include the importance of remembrance; access to justice for victims of terrorism; rehabilitation, assistance and support as well as protecting and addressing the rights and needs of victims of terrorism with specific needs.

The Congress concludes on 9 September with a Chair’s Summary that will lay the groundwork for a roadmap that will guide the international agenda in advancing the rights and the needs of victims of terrorism.

The Global Congress also features the [“Memories” campaign](#), which tells the stories of 22 victims of terrorism through films and a photographic exhibition. The campaign allows the audience to relate to victims, to feel their loss and see their resilience, and to better understand the importance of remembering and paying tribute to victims of terrorism worldwide.

Additional information can be found on the dedicated webpage for the [2022 Global Congress](#) and twitter [@UN_OCT](#). Watch the Congress live on [UN Web TV](#) and the [press conference](#) by Raffi Gregorian, UNOCT Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General and Director of UNOCT.

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