



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

**Opening Remarks by Mr. Raffi Gregorian,
Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General and Director,
United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)**

Roundtable: on “Enhancing Member States’ capacity to support the needs and rights of victims of terrorism through the Model Legislative Provisions and the development of National Comprehensive Assistance Plans”

**14 March 2023
New York**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Colleagues,
Dear survivors,

I am very pleased to welcome you to the roundtable on "Enhancing Member States' capacity to support the needs and rights of victims of terrorism through the Model Legislative Provisions and the development of National Comprehensive Assistance Plans."

Our gathering today is testament to our collective commitment to support those most affected by the scourge of terrorism – its victims and survivors.

We all know that terrorism inflicts immense physical and mental suffering: from the level of individual victims and their families to the national societal level and beyond.

It is our collective goal to prevent future attacks and loss of life, and to ensure that victims and survivors receive the support they need to rebuild their lives.

The United Nations and its Member States have made great strides over just the past few years to move from symbolic solidarity towards a more robust engagement to advance victims’ rights and needs. It has been heartening to see that Member States have listened and agreed on the need for a victim-centered approach.

Key milestones, such as International Day for Victims and the first United Nations Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism have laid the groundwork and provided guidance at the international level. Opportunities to provide strong leadership continue this year: the General Assembly's forthcoming 8th review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy enables us to strengthen support to victims, while the Africa Counter-Terrorism Summit, expected to be held in Nigeria later this year, will have a critical focus on victims and survivors of terrorism continent-wide, reinforcing Africa's commitment to victims.

However, without action at the national level, where laws are adopted and implementing actions taken, we risk losing the momentum generated at the international level. It is imperative that Member States not only tailor their responses to the needs of victims and survivors, but that their domestic legislation upholds the rights of victims in line with international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law, and that national action plans are comprehensive, holistic, and reflect a whole-of-society approach.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Victims are the reason why we do what we do at UNOCT, and why we established the Global Victims of Terrorism Support Programme to promote victims' rights and needs, and to support Member States and civil society organizations in advancing them.

In February 2022, the Victims Programme and UNOCT's Programme Office for Parliamentary Engagement, together with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, launched the "Model Legislative Provisions to Support the Needs and Protect the Rights of Victims of Terrorism". The MLP, as we call it, provides concrete steps to assist Member States to develop legislative frameworks and assistance plans to support victims of terrorism, grounded in international humanitarian and human rights law.

We are at a critical juncture. We have developed the building blocks to support victims and survivors but are expecting something to be done with them. Building on the MLP, and working with UNODC, UNOCT is pleased to announce the launch of its project "Technical support on the rights and needs of victims of terrorism through the establishment of National Comprehensive Assistance Plans and Model Legislative Provisions".

I would like to express my deep gratitude to the U.S. Department of State for co-funding this important project.

This project, the first of its kind to strengthen Member States legislative frameworks and address victims' needs through comprehensive action plans, helps Member States develop their capacity to support victims and survivors of terrorism, advance their rights and needs, and take concrete and practical steps in preventing and countering violent extremism and terrorism.

Today's roundtable provides us with the opportunity of sharing experiences, highlighting the benefits of implementing the MLP, and hearing directly from victims and Member States about

the impact strengthened legislation and victim-centric approaches have in making our communities stronger and more resilient. This is an opportunity for all of us to learn from each other, understand the benefits the MLP brings, and listen to a variety of voices, which bring unique perspectives to this discussion.

I hope that after this morning's discussion, you will better appreciate the benefits of implementing the legislative provisions at the national level and developing national comprehensive assistance plans. More specifically, we hope to identify Member States interested in benefitting from participation in this initiative.

I look forward to hearing from our distinguished speakers and exploring how we can all work together to support victims of terrorism around the world.

Thank you.

**Closing remarks by
Mr. Raffi Gregorian,
Director and Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General of the
United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism**

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Excellencies,
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Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Survivors

Today's roundtable has given us the opportunity to discuss and reflect on the importance of understanding, incorporating, and implementing legislation and action plans in support of victims of terrorism.

We have had a rich exchange on the need to develop and strengthen mechanisms that cater to the various and individual needs of victims of terrorism: understanding the benefits it brings at both the individual and societal level. I am also particularly encouraged by this morning's attendance at both capital and mission level, highlighting once again Member State consensus on the need to support the rights and needs of victims and survivors of terrorism.

I would like to reiterate our gratitude to the distinguished speakers: victims of terrorism, Member States, parliamentarians and partners for their interventions and continued support to victims of terrorism.

I am particularly grateful for Fatima's and Imrana's participation, and their perspectives on how the theoretical can become the practical, how implementation does not have to be made difficult or onerous, but just needs a gentle push to get going!

I also wish to thank the US Department of State, as well as Ms. Andria Kerney, from the US Department of Justice, for their strong support as our main funding partner of this important MLP initiative, to Ms. Fernanda Lombardi from UNODC, a close partner on this project, and to Chairman Reinhold Lopatka for underscoring the importance of including parliamentarians in this initiative.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to the Group of Friends for their leading role in supporting victims: and we are pleased to continue supporting the Group in their initiatives to advance the rights of victims of terrorism and the support available to them.

Today's discussion reinforces the notion that Member States, civil society, victims, parliamentarians all play a critical role in aligning best practices to the national context.

Ladies and gentlemen,

By integrating specific legislative provisions on victims - including in areas such as recognition, access to justice, assistance and support, compensation, and remembrance - into national comprehensive assistance plans, Member States will ensure that efforts to prevent, counter and respond to violent extremism remain true to victims' needs and rights.

We must continue to listen to victims and give a voice to their needs. They have told us about the importance of recognition and how it is the gateway to assistance, compensation, and criminal justice systems. They have shared their experiences of recovery and the things that helped them.

So let us use this insight to help strengthen our domestic frameworks, to work together in partnership to ensure that the rights of victims of terrorism are protected and enshrined in legislation, and that their needs are met through the development of national comprehensive assistance plans.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me emphasize that Member States need to maximize existing systems and legislation for the benefit of victims. We stand ready to provide technical assistance and to work with interested national authorities to address the needs and uphold the rights of victims via this technical

assistance. We will do so through UNOCT's programmes on Global Victims of Terrorism Support and Parliamentary Engagement, in collaboration with our close partner, UNODC.

In line with the UNOCT commitments presented in the Chair's summary of last September's Global Congress for Victims of Terrorism, we look forward to working together towards the effective implementation of the Model Legislative Provisions and to supporting Member States' efforts to take practical steps in developing national frameworks that are holistic, victim-centric, and sustainable.

To conclude, I would like to express my gratitude to all partners contributing to the Global Victims of Terrorism Support Programme, who by doing so make possible the implementation of initiatives such as this one: the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the State of Qatar, and the Kingdom of Spain, and to the United States, which specifically contributed to this important project. Thanks to the kind contribution of the latter, we are now ready to respond immediately to assistance requests from Member States, as called for in General Assembly resolution 73/305.

We hope this roundtable will mark the beginning of an impactful and sustainable collaboration to provide Member States with the support and the tools to build or enhance the necessary national structures to provide victims of terrorism the needed assistance and support.

Thank you very much.