

**Statement by the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism - Third International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism**

**21 August 2020**

Your Excellency President of General Assembly,  
Your Excellency Mr. Secretary-General Guterres,  
Your Excellency Under-Secretary-General Voronkov,  
Distinguished Ambassadors,  
Respected victims of terrorism,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honor to speak to you today on behalf of the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism on the occasion of the Third International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism. Today, we reiterate our firm commitment, as a global community of nations, to fight against the threat of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, while recognizing and supporting the voice of victims of terrorism and their families. This is the day we would like to amplify the voices of support and solidarity to the victims of terrorism and demonstrate that we are united, resilient and stand against terrorism.

The heinous and evolving threat of terrorism has proven to be one of the biggest challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The non-stop violence and suffering provoked by it has left deep wounds around the world making it clear that this menace affects all of us and requires a cohesive and united front for its defeat. When talking about defeating terrorism, we often talk about the important role of security and on fighting terrorist groups and criminal associates on the ground. Nevertheless, as this Group has worked and advocated for, terrorism will only be effectively defeated through actions that promote and protect the rights of victims of terrorism, in particular women and children, and which incorporate the invaluable voice of victims, and the lessons learned from their experiences.

Today we will have the opportunity to watch the presentation of, “Not Forgotten: Stories of Remembrance of Victims of Terrorism”, a film where victims and survivors of terrorism will speak of remembrance, and their personal journey and experience, especially in the context of the pandemic.

Excellencies,

Since the formation of the Group of Friends one year ago, we have advocated on the importance of supporting victims of terrorism and on providing them a platform through which their voices can be consistently heard, and their concerns addressed. Victims are important stakeholders in the fight against terrorism and we believe that their experiences are valuable in understanding the best ways to help them overcome trauma, and that their stories of resilience and strength are valuable to any who would face a similar tragedy.

The UN General Assembly has recognized the importance of this, first through the adoption of resolution 72/165, proposed by Afghanistan, which proclaimed this day as the International Day of Remembrance of Victims of Terrorism, and then last year with the adoption of resolution 73/305 on the “Enhancement of International Cooperation to Assist Victims of Terrorism.” The Group has continued its efforts through convening expert and high-level meetings, including the First Ministerial meeting of the Group of Friends held in September 2019, that we intend to celebrate again next September, to further consolidate and support the activities and objectives of the group.

As we suffer from the dreadful effects of COVID-19, it is important that Member States keep working to develop comprehensive plans in order to provide both immediate, and short-term assistance to victims, and to ensure that the voices of those affected are given the attention they deserve, in the aftermath of these attacks as they rebuild their lives. In this sense, we think that the organization, next year, of the First International Congress for Victims of Terrorism, postponed this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, will be an important milestone in this process, reinforcing our efforts in ensuring the role of the victims in fight against terrorism, and we look forward to collaborating to the success of this congress.

With the ongoing threat of COVID-19, it is also important to remember that the pandemic has not slowed down terrorist groups from conducting their operations around the world, and that while new attacks continue to take place, the needs of victims from previous attacks remain. We need to redouble efforts in ensuring that we are in a position to continue to assist to them and communicate with them throughout the duration of this pandemic.

Excellencies,

This is the third year of a movement that has been built from Member States coming together to raise awareness on the situation of victims of terrorism through a series of concrete objectives. We hope that more Member States will be able to join this process and take a step back to listen and learn from the stories of endurance of victims in the face of the trauma and shock that they have experienced. We need to work together to address *the phenomenon* of terrorism through our individual counter-terrorism strategies, and *the* effective and comprehensive implementation of the UN Global Counter-terrorism strategy.

And with that said, I would like to once again express, on behalf of all the members of the Group of Friends of the Victims of Terrorism, our firm commitment and support to continue working for the victims of terrorism to bring about the recognition and support that they deserve.

I thank you.