



INVICTM

International Network Supporting Victims
of Terrorism and Mass Violence

SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF TERRORISM

REPORT OF THE INVICTM SYMPOSIUM
IN STOCKHOLM
2018

SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF TERRORISM

REPORT OF THE INVICTM SYMPOSIUM STOCKHOLM 2018

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DISCLAIMER

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Sue O'Sullivan,

Chair

INVICTM International Network Supporting Victims of Terrorism and Mass Violence

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On May 19, 2018, INVICTM - International Network Supporting Victims of Terrorism and Mass Violence - held its second international symposium on Supporting Victims of Terrorism in Stockholm, Sweden. This report reflects the discussions held during the symposium.

Terrorism affects individuals, communities and societies. The Circles of Impact model offers a framework to illustrate the breadth of the potential impact of a terrorist attack: four circles encompass the different groups in society that an attack might affect. The inner circle of victimization contains individuals during the terrorist attack and directly affected by it.

A second, wider, circle includes the direct victims' close social environment, such as family, friends or peers. The third circle refers to individuals who are part of the formal support network such as first responders or victim support providers. And the fourth, largest circle embraces the wider society of which the individual victim is a member.

A victim response aimed at understanding and responding to the needs of all those affected by terrorism builds on the Circles of Impact model and can be more inclusive than relying on limited legal definitions of who is a victim.

Experts agree that a broad set of needs are common to victims of all types of crime. Victims of terrorism, however, can have additional needs and exacerbated common crime victim needs. Symposium participants identified respect and recognition, commemoration, information provision, support, compensation, access to justice and peer support as some of terrorism victims' primary needs. The list is not exhaustive nor are the needs isolated from one another -- they are closely intertwined. This report describes primary terrorism victim needs and offers tips, practical solutions, good practices and examples from across the globe to help meet these needs.

Given the complexities of supporting victims of terrorism, experts recommend a flexible approach to responding to each unique terrorist attack. Years of experience and expertise, however, allow us to identify some common predictable challenges and the practical solutions that can address them. Participants from around the world identified local challenges and practical solutions for supporting victims of terrorism during the symposium.

A high quality response to victims of terrorism should build on a number of basic principles:

First, understand that short and long-term terrorism victim needs are intertwined. No matter how well the immediate response is carried out, there will unavoidably be long-term consequences to the victim.

Second, the foundation for an effective response is a victim-centered perspective that incorporates listening to individual victims to identify their needs and being attentive to the particular needs of vulnerable groups. Individuals or groups that are particularly vulnerable to the

impact of terrorist attacks include children, cross-border victims, support providers or individuals who could have been on the scene of the attack. Vulnerable individuals may have particular needs that require a specialized and adaptive response. Given the nature of the scenario used during the symposium, participants focused, in particular, on cross-border victims. Increasingly, foreigners become victims in a country that is not their own, which adds a layer of complexity to both understanding and responding to victim needs.

Third, sufficient advance planning and preparation form the backbone of any comprehensive response for victims of terrorism. Symposium participants reinforced the importance of the preparatory phase identifying numerous steps that can and should be taken in advance of an attack.

Fourth, effective coordination in times of need builds on a network established during the preparatory phase. The work of creating networks is currently ongoing at both national and international levels. INVICTM's leadership role in fostering and facilitating a network is an important step in improving international collaboration to strengthen the support for all victims of terrorism.

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INTRODUCTION

A. INTERNATIONAL NETWORK SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF TERRORISM AND MASS VIOLENCE - INVICTM -

In 2016, the International Framework of Dialogue and Information Sharing (IFDIS) was created, bringing together a group of trusted experts dedicated to improving support for victims of terrorism. Without a formal structure or legal entity, the group dedicated their time and shared good practices and lessons learned, with the goal of enhancing support to victims of terrorism by furthering knowledge about terrorism victim needs. Built on trust and confidentiality, the group grew as a platform for sharing knowledge and information until becoming a forum for experts from around the world to leverage new information and expertise for use in their own countries. The group includes NGOs, law enforcement agencies, civil society members and other experts that provide information based upon their background, country and professional perspective.

Since its inception, this closed expert group shared ideas about how to better support victims, identifying practices with global application potential. IFDIS combines monthly phone calls facilitating the exchange of knowledge and experiences, with a swift and reactive network that helps partners respond to attacks or urgent questions. The network has already fostered change across countries, and in the short time IFDIS has been in existence has worked hard to improve support for victims of terrorism. This includes activities such as varied as legislative proposals incorporating current international expertise, to coordinating continuous support for cross-border victims after an attack, to bringing together a broad range of experts in its annual symposia.

In July 2016, IFDIS changed its name to International Network Supporting Victims of Terrorism and Mass Violence (INVICTM). The name change reflects the expanding network, mission and activities of INVICTM, which brings together experts from around the world to improve support for victims of terrorism and mass violence. Although the Stockholm Symposium was held under the name IFDIS, throughout the rest of the report, INVICTM will be used when referring to the group.

B. SYMPOSIUM IN STOCKHOLM 2018

NO MATTER HOW
MUCH WE'VE
LEARNED ABOUT
SUPPORTING VICTIMS,
WE CAN ALWAYS DO
BETTER.

On May 19, 2018, INVICTM held its second International Symposium on Supporting Victims of Terrorism in Stockholm, Sweden. The symposia are closed events with a limited number of invited global experts. Under the moderation of Chairperson Sue O'Sullivan, the sixty-two (62) participants shared knowledge and experiences with the aim of improving support for victims of terrorism. Practitioners, policy makers, law enforcement agents and researchers from Europe, the Middle East, North America and Australia gathered to work together, using the underlying principles of trust and confidentiality in sharing information under Chatham House rules. The introductory session set the tone for this year's symposium, opening with the William Butler Yeats' quote, *"There are no strangers here, only friends we haven't met."*

Delegates were expected to not only listen but to roll up their sleeves and work. Throughout the day, a scenario/table-top exercise generated much discussion, which allowed the sharing of knowledge and experience about the challenges and possible solutions participants had identified. The Chatham House rules made possible an open discussion of real world examples of what went wrong and why, what went well, and how solutions were developed.

A panel of experts was on hand throughout the day, sharing their experience, knowledge and lessons learned after feedback from the discussion groups. The full program and the scenario that formed the centerpiece of the meeting is the annex to this report.

In a survey the respondents evaluated their participation very positively. When asked about the value of their efforts coming to the Stockholm respondents on average answered 9 on a scale from 0 to 10. Respondents highly valued their 'learning experience' (mean = 8/10) and the 'networking opportunity' (mean = 9/10) during the symposium. The overall majority described a feeling of empowerment from their participation and testified that they would use the knowledge acquired in their daily work (mean = 8, 5/10). While the participants welcomed the scenario as a positive learning tool, some felt its extensive detail didn't always allow for in-depth discussion. Participants lauded the networking opportunities, the format of combining discussions and expert panels (though some participants would welcome more case studies), the further exploration of different topics (e.g. preparation, working with children, research). In general, the feedback was very positive and INVICTM will continue to organize these invitation-only symposia with the possibility of expanding to a two-day event.

C. THIS REPORT

This report reflects the discussions held during the symposium but does not offer an exhaustive analysis; rather it describes some of the challenges, solutions and good practices identified

by participants. It is organized around key concepts and challenges involved in assisting victims of terrorism, noting that it addresses only a limited number of issues. The report offers a starting point on which to build future symposia as well as the development of good practices. In respecting the Chatham House rules under which the symposium was held the report does not mention sources, with the exception of identifying the expert panel members.

D. PREDICTABLE CHALLENGES AND PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

Support for victims of terrorism is complex and requires a flexible approach to adapt to each unique terrorist attack. Nonetheless, expertise and experience have allowed for the identification of predictable challenges and practical solutions. One example is an approach developed by the FBI Victim Services Division to both improve support for victims of terrorism and share knowledge. In this approach, the FBI identifies predictable issues and their tailored, practical solutions. Symposium participants built on this approach by contributing their own challenges and local practical solutions.

At the end of each key concept section, there will be a listing of the predictable challenges and practical solutions associated with that issue.



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CHAPTER TWO

WHO ARE THE VICTIMS?

A. THE CIRCLES OF IMPACT

Terrorism affects individuals, communities and societies. In the aftermath of an attack, identifying who is a victim is complex and requires an understanding of the different ways people can be affected. Symposium participants agreed to use of the Circles of Impact model to illustrate those impacted by a terrorist attack.

While legal definitions and categorizations of victims of terrorism differ from country to country, these circles of impact offer an overview of the breadth of the potential impacts of a terrorist attack:

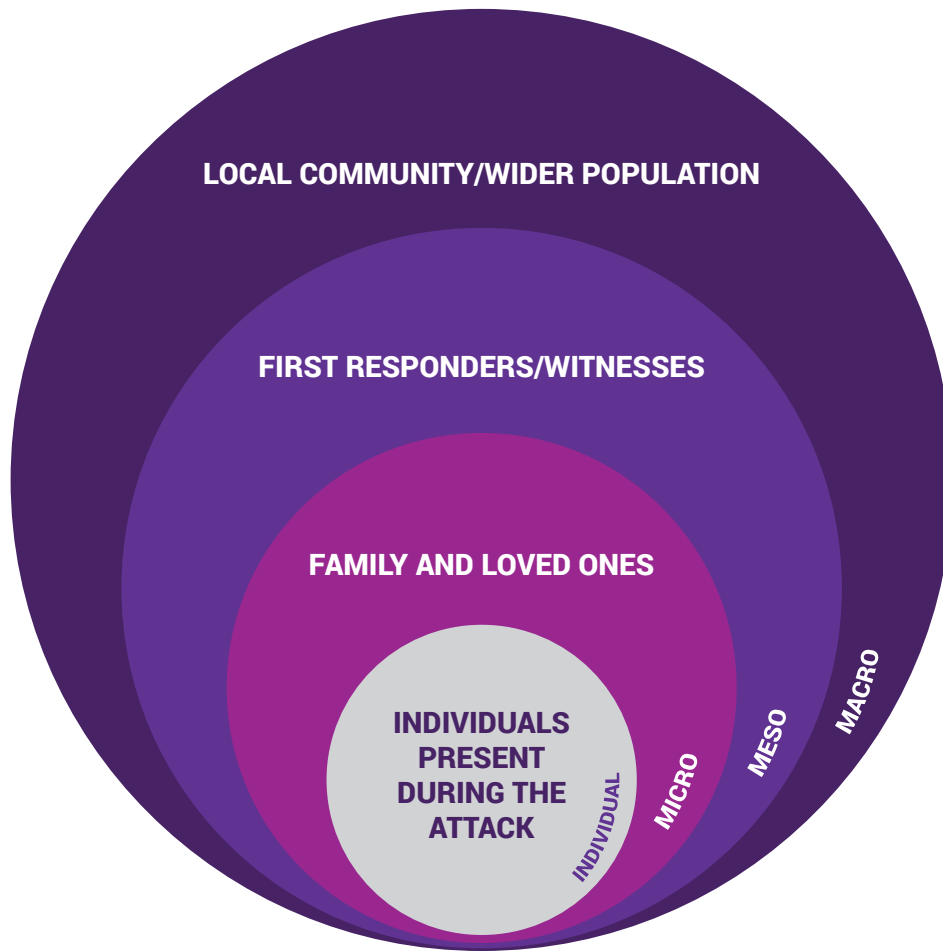


Figure 1 Circles of impact¹

The inner circle of impact includes the individuals present at the scene and directly affected by the terrorist attack, referred to as “direct victims”. The trauma caused to the individual present at the scene can include psychological, physical, and financial distress. Within this first group of victims are included the deceased, the injured and the physically uninjured.

The second circle of impact includes the direct victim’s close social environment, such as family, friends, or peers. The next of kin of deceased victims are generally recognized as particularly affected; however, experience shows that the next of kin of those who are physically injured or psychologically harmed may also be significantly affected.

The third circle includes individuals who are part of the formal support network around individual victims such as first responders, law enforcement investigators, victim support workers, and other professionals in immediate or long-term support roles. Accidental responders or Good Samaritans are also included in this circle of victimization.

¹ O’Sullivan, S. (2016). Victim-Centred considerations for the development of a National Security Framework. Submission to Public Safety Canada’s National Security Consultation. Ottawa, Canada: Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime.
Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

The fourth circle embraces the wider society of which the individual victim is a member. Within this larger population, the impact of terrorism may be of a psychological, social or economic nature. In the aftermath of terrorist attacks, a rise in psychological difficulties has been observed in the general population (e.g. people living in the area)². Thus, the community as a whole faces the consequences of terrorism, either directly or indirectly, through the ripple effect of violence.

Within this population, we can identify a number of individuals or groups particularly vulnerable to the impact of terrorist attacks who would benefit from support. Those groups include:

- Children and schools – Experts identify children and schools as particularly vulnerable to psychological harm if they are directly affected by a terrorist attack. In March 2016, Belgian schools were placed under lockdown right after the Brussels attacks while one of the attackers was still at large. Those children are identified as having a potential need for tailored support.
- Minority groups - In the wake of terrorist attacks, there can be a substantial increase of hate crime and hate speech against different groups. These attacks range from social media trolling, revenge attacks, and targeted property crimes. While these attacks tend to focus on minorities the attacker claims to represent, an increase in hate incidents takes place towards a broad range of minority groups. According to symposium experts, research corroborates these trends and reveals an increase in hate crimes against the Jewish community and refugees, for example, in the aftermath of terrorist attacks.
- Vulnerable individuals – Persons with pre-existing psychological or psychiatric difficulties or persons who have undergone similar traumatic experiences were identified as susceptible to additional psychological impact from a terrorist attack.
- Those who ‘could have been there’ – People that have a link with the attack location, or group targeted, may be particularly affected psychologically. Individuals who were present at the scene minutes

²W. E. Schlenger, J. M. Caddell, L. Ebert et al, Psychological Reactions to Terrorist Attacks – Findings from the National Study of Americans’ Reactions to September 11, August 2002, available at: <http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/195165>

before, took similar public transport at the time of the attack, or those who 'should have been there,' might have particular needs for support as the recognition that they 'should/could have been there' can be psychologically difficult to bear.

- Businesses – Often overlooked, but frequently bearing the impact of a terrorist attack, are businesses. Many businesses near the attack site may temporarily shut down and/or lose revenue due to the attack. During the symposium, experts referred to the impact on businesses during city lock-downs such as those that took place after the Paris and Brussels attacks.
- People living close to the attack site – Living or working very close to the site of the attack can affect an individual because their environment and daily routines are disrupted, they confront the aftermath every day, and they may have a connections to direct victims.

It should be noted that each terrorist attack is different and requires the circles of impact to be re-defined to cover the unique circumstances of the individual attack.

B. PREDICTABLE CHALLENGES: IDENTIFICATION OF VICTIMS

MULTIPLE VICTIM POPULATIONS TO IDENTIFY

There are multiple victim populations to identify, including the missing/deceased, the injured, those present but not injured, businesses, and the wider community, including particularly vulnerable groups. During and immediately after an attack the deceased and injured victims are often the first to be identified. Other victims may be harder to identify and be revealed later, or may never self-identify while still suffering from the impact of the attack.

Stepping forward as a victim to receive support can be difficult for those not physically injured, especially directly after an attack. For psychological or social reasons, being labelled a 'victim' can be difficult for some of those affected. The way people define themselves, as victims or survivors, may change over time and self-identification as a victim might be part of an individual's healing process.

CLOSED VS. OPEN VICTIM POPULATIONS

A closed terrorist attack is an attack in a confined area, such as on an airplane, which will have a more defined and easily identifiable victim population. Attacks with an open victim population make victim identification more challenging. Many victims will leave the scene without having been in touch with the authorities or support providers.

After recent large-scale attacks, defining who is a victim became more complex. A victim's geographical distance from the center of the attack has been used as a defining factor for victim identification, e.g. an individual's proximity to bomb locations at the Boston Marathon bombings, or the route taken by the truck at the Nice terrorist attack. In Paris, some people who tried to flee the scenes were initially treated as potential perpetrators.

CIRCLES OF IMPACT GO BEYOND LEGAL DEFINITIONS OF VICTIM

The countries represented in the INVICTM group and by the symposium's participants use different categorizations and definitions to determine who is a victim. In the UK, the first category of victims are those injured and killed and the deceased's next of kin, denominated as 'P1'. Other countries differentiate victims according to the level of harm suffered.

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They registered my name and told me they would inform me whether they found her or not. But they didn't call. Through other people I was getting contradicting information. 'We have seen your sister, she's alright' while others said she passed away. At that time you hold on to the smallest hope. Next day I went looking again from hospital to hospital. I was trying to search, without having gotten any sleep. As you long as you don't have confirmation, you stick with the idea she might be alive.

Those killed and injured are the initial focus, but the circle widens gradually and does not include businesses until later in the process. The Belgian government makes the distinction between direct victims (those present at the scene) and indirect victims (the next of kin, partners or those who can prove a close relationship to the direct victims). These legal frameworks unavoidably create a form of prioritization, and can create the impression there is a hierarchy of victims.

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS OF FAMILIES WHILE ENSURING ACCURATE, FORENSIC IDENTIFICATION

The insecurity of 'not knowing' that victim families experience after a terrorist attack can be traumatizing and life changing. Some families initially have to search on their own for missing family members, while the lack of a centralized victim list system means victims may go from hospital to hospital, both of which can be very traumatic.

On the other hand, the forensic identification process can be complex and time-consuming. Testimonies of victims at the INVICTM symposium confirmed that, for some recent attacks, a significant length of time had elapsed before the identification of victims was completed. It can be challenging to balance the victims' need for information while ensuring law enforcement can conclusively identify victims.

DELIVERING TIMELY DEATH NOTIFICATIONS

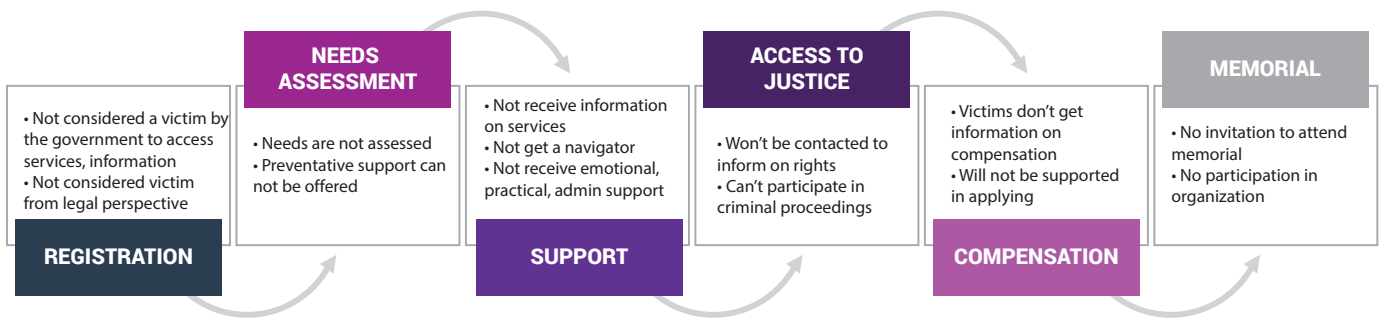
Receiving a death notification is a difficult ordeal for victims' families, while the delivery of a death notification is also a challenge for experienced law enforcement agents. In many terrorist attacks, the weapons used make it impossible to return an intact body. Authorities struggle to identify the point at which they should stop returning fragments, and there is a sense that notification should not go on indefinitely as it can be re-traumatizing to contact victims each time a body part is identified.

VICTIM REGISTRATION

At the scene of the attack, the priority for law enforcement agencies is the safety of those present including the need to diffuse other potential threats. While it is important that the authorities register those present, individuals (especially cross-border victims) who are not physically hurt may want to leave the attack scene as soon as possible. Therefore, after

many terrorist attacks, it has proved challenging to register the physically uninjured; however, the consequences of not being registered as a victim can be far reaching, especially when it comes to the psychological side effects suffered.

POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT BEING REGISTERED AS A VICTIM



In practice, the immediate registration of all victims in an open attack has proven close to impossible. Even when there is an attempt at registration, challenges remain in developing an accurate victim list. For example, after the 7/7/2005 London bombings there were 60,000 persons reported missing in the first hour, with ten persons reported multiple times with different spellings of their names.

ALL THOSE AFFECTED HAVE NEEDS

A terrorist attack affects the whole society; however, resources for supporting all affected are limited. Resource limitations often lead governments and organizations to prioritize certain victims over others due to a needs-based assessment. Consequently, most governmental and organizational responses focus on the first and second circles of impact. This prioritization seems unavoidable, but it may distress some victims who feel their injuries are not considered as important as other victim's injuries. In particular, survivors who suffered mental trauma may feel there is a hierarchy of victims with prioritization of visible injuries. It is important, therefore, to communicate clearly and repeatedly to all victims that they have rights and are entitled to support. For instance, all groups and individuals in society need information. The presumed intrinsic aim behind terrorist attacks is to strike the largest number of victims possible and to damage society. Broader societal support is necessary to mitigate the intended damage.

C. PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

DEATH NOTIFICATION TRAINING

The FBI provides free, on-line training for authorities who deliver death notifications. The training offers information and tools to encourage notifications that are clear, concise and delivered with empathy. The training can be found at <http://deathnotification.psu.edu/>.

SELF-REGISTRATION

After attacks with open victim populations, the FBI posts a 'seeking victims page'. After a victim registers him/herself, law enforcement vets the victims. This mechanism can be helpful for those determined to be victims as well as those that fall outside the official definition of victim, as they may still be able to access general information and resources that may be of help. It is, however, important to not solely rely on self-registration because many victims will still not come forward independently.

QUICK REGISTRATION

Some governments are exploring providing a quick on-scene registration process. For example, using fingerprints or messaging, people can leave the scene quickly, but will then be traceable afterwards.

"PROVISIONAL" NOTIFICATION AND SUBSEQUENT UPDATES

There should be a plan for informing and preparing families of unaccounted-for-victims prior to a final, conclusive, identification. In the UK, victims are told that a responder can only provide facts, and without official confirmation cannot give a formal death notification. However, responders can share those facts they have – e.g. 'witnesses saw John in the car, the car exploded and John did not come out'.

AGREEMENTS ON DEATH NOTIFICATION

In cases where identification of victims' remains is a long-term process, law enforcement agents can discuss with victims' next of kin how and whether they want to be notified when additional remains are identified.

DESIGNATE INDIVIDUALS TO MANAGE VICTIM LIST

Designated support providers should be responsible for registering and developing a list of known victims.

CENTRALIZED VICTIM LIST

In some countries, like France, the different victims' lists are digitalized and centralized to improve information and services to victims.

ASSIGN A SKILLED SERVICE PROVIDER/LIAISON TO EACH FAMILY

Family liaison officers from the UK are assigned immediately after an attack to support and inform victims throughout the investigation and criminal proceedings.

ASSIGN SKILLED PROFESSIONALS TO GET INFORMATION FROM FAMILIES

Ensure that officials working with victims are appropriately trained on topics such as the collection of DNA information. Assigned officials should be those with experience in collecting sensitive information, rather than unskilled junior officers. In the UK, senior investigators and senior officers are in charge of victim identification.

PUBLIC CAMPAIGNS FOR THOSE AFFECTED

Many victims will not come forward, or even label themselves as victims. Public campaigns can reduce any perceived stigma and help victims to register, be informed, or to get the support they need. Communicating thoughtfully and sensitively with the wider public about available services and victims' rights may encourage people to come forward for support.

DEFINITIONS OF VICTIMS

Develop clear definitions of the different types of victims during the preparatory phase. The circles of impact model offers an overview of potential victims, or people affected outside the legal definitions. Starting from this perspective enables quicker identification of a larger population, making timely and preventative interventions possible. For governments and organizations, it is beneficial to look beyond the legal definition of victims and consider how to support those affected who do not have legal recognition. For example, while victim compensation is available to a limited category of legally defined victims, other people affected could benefit from widely offered practical or psychosocial support services.

3



CHAPTER THREE

NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM

During the symposium, it was often mentioned that a broad set of needs are common to all crime victims. Terrorism victims will have additional but different needs. Common basic crime victim needs may be exacerbated by the nature of the attack terrorism victims endured. Within the larger group of terrorism victims, responses for certain sub-groups may have to be different. Furthermore, the needs of each individual victim will vary to some extent and require an individualized, victim-centered approach. Needs can be visualized as a pyramid of victims' requirements addressed at different levels and in different ways:

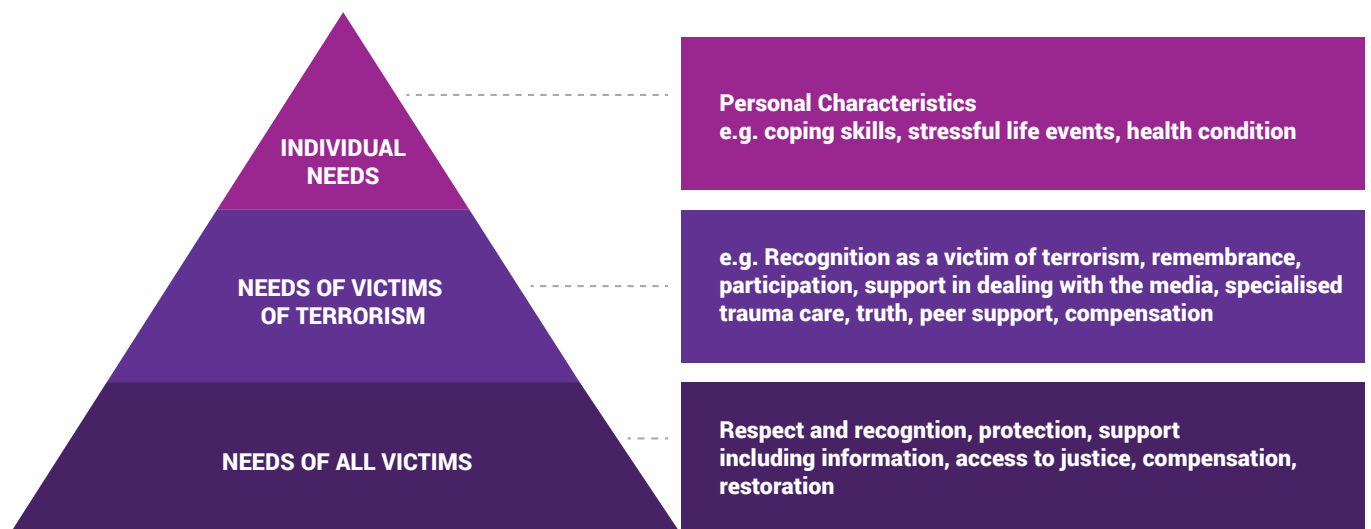


Figure 2 Needs of Victims of Terrorism.³

³ Victim Support Europe - Ivankovic, A., Verelst, A., Altan, L., Jeney, P. (2017). How can the EU and Member States better help the victims of Terrorism. LIBE Committee European Parliament: Brussels

While the needs of victims of terrorism are to some extent different from the needs of other crime victims, multiple experts warn against clearly disparate treatment of terrorism victims.

Example: An example provided was of a bus that drove into a crowd in a European country. Immediately after the incident people panicked, and services and crisis helplines were set up. As it became clear through official sources and media that this was not a terrorist attack, the public was relieved and services and support were discontinued almost immediately. While for the public the impact of the incident was very different once it was clear it was not a terrorist attack, for the individual family impacted by the bus accident, the loss they suffered was the same.

Throughout the symposium, attendees identified a number of particular and exacerbated needs terrorism victims experience. These include the following:

A. RESPECT AND RECOGNITION

Every victim needs respect and recognition from the government and other support providers. Respect and recognition are especially crucial for the healing process of terrorism victims, and are addressed by the way individuals and systems, especially governments and other support providers, treat victims. Victims should be treated a) in a sensitive, respectful, and fair manner; b) with empathy; c) with dignity.

Example: Some victims of the 2015 Sousse, Tunisia terrorist attack had to find missing family members themselves. Victims were asked to go to the beach to look for their family members among the deceased where they had to lift up towels placed over the dead bodies to identify family members. The dignity of both the deceased victims and the next of kin was diminished.

B. COMMEMORATION

One of the most significant ways to recognize terrorism victims is through commemorations for those killed and harmed in attacks. Memorial events are a crucial part of demonstrating to victims that they are not forgotten, and that their status as victims is respected and recognized.

While memorials were deemed important by most participants, the topic did not lead to in-depth discussion during this symposium. However, one of the challenges mentioned was that affected families and stakeholders may hold divergent opinions about the message a memorial should convey. Some families might focus on an expression of grief, while others might require a political statement; consequently, these different perspectives necessitate the families being included in planning the memorial.

C. INFORMATION

As one participant stated:

“

Providing information to victims and their families are numbers 1, 2, and 3 on the list of priorities.

Good planning and thoughtful communication are key to preventing re-victimization. Given the open nature of many terrorist attacks, there is an immediate focus on the victims' need for information that should be taken into consideration during preplanning stages. The need for information is broad and long term. The provision of information is critical as it may help prevent further harm (particularly psychological) both for direct victims as those affected in the wider society. Throughout the symposium, experts spoke of how poor communication can have a disproportionate psychological impact on victims.

I. WHAT INFORMATION SHOULD BE GIVEN?

Throughout the symposium, participants highlighted that the following types of information should be provided to victims from the immediate aftermath of an attack through the long term:

- **What is the current situation:** People affected by terrorist attacks

- need to know what is happening, while the general public wants safety concerns addressed and to know what actions will be taken;
- **Where to get information:** People should know where to find up-to-date information;
 - **Where to go for care:** Victims need crucial information about the support services available to them;
 - **What happened to their loved ones:** Death notifications were deemed extremely important by all experts and participants;
 - **How to deal with practical issues:** Victims need information on how to return home, retrieve lost baggage and passports, and where to get information or support;
 - **What are their rights:** Victims need to know about their rights to information and participation, access to justice, support, and compensation.

II. MODES OF COMMUNICATION

Websites

Symposium participants agreed that maintaining a website providing clear, easily accessible, accurate and up-to-date information is an important communication tool for victims and the larger community.

GOOD PRACTICE: MH17 WEBSITE

On 17 July 2014, Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 was shot down while flying above Ukraine, killing 283 passengers and 15 crew members. 193 of the victims were Dutch. In the immediate aftermath of the attack, VSE member Slachtofferhulp Nederland (Victim Support Netherlands) set up a response system by building, hosting and maintaining the Immediate Response Centre (IRC) at www.planecrashukraine.nl. This approach remains unprecedented because of the way Slachtofferhulp Nederland responded, and continues to respond, to the need of victims for information. Agreements were made with government institutions that information would first be provided to victims, then posted on the website, and only after that shared with the press and other sources. This made the website the most trustworthy, up-to-date and reliable source of information. The website also has a closed section for information and discussion fora dedicated to victims.

Websites are advantageous because a general framework can be prepared in advance and completed when an event occurs, allowing the website to go live in a matter of hours.

Example: The FBI developed templates so that in the event of a terrorist attack, it can very quickly provide general resources and information for those affected as well as providing online questionnaires for victims to self-identify.

Written information including Flyers and Brochures

Having clear tangible written information can allow victims to take in facts when they are ready. The language used in written information should be clear and easy to understand for people from different backgrounds and intellectual capacities. On the other hand, the risk of overburdening victims with written documentation should not be underestimated. An expert with a Belgian terror attacks victim's organization explained that the receipt of too many written documents and flyers might overwhelm victims.

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At a certain moment you feel overwhelmed with information, many people will give you leaflets until you end up with over a dozen leaflets. It is too much.

Media and Press

The media can play an important role in disseminating information for victims and the wider population. However, the potentially traumatic impact of watching media to get information regarding events, support services, or the safety of a loved one can be harmful given the potentially re-traumatizing nature of the images and stories.

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They even refer you to the press because they don't know what is happening – you don't want to listen to the press.

Many participants agreed that, even with the risk of re-victimization, the press is a significant source of information for those affected by terrorism. Media collaboration allows for the spread of valuable information about psycho-education and available services. Law enforcement agencies and government actors should be visible in the media as providers of accurate information.

GOOD PRACTICE: EDUCATE THE LOCAL MEDIA

After an attack in Colorado, local U.S. victim services providers educated local media on how to support victims in the immediate aftermath of the event. The advice passed on to the public included identifying common victim reactions and recommending strategies for interaction with victims in order to prevent re-victimization. The local providers also identified victims who were willing to talk to the media, protecting the larger victim population from being harassed by different media outlets

The press can be used to inform sub-groups in a targeted way. For example, communicating to children and youths about an attack and discussing age-appropriate coping mechanisms can be done through mainstream media.

GOOD PRACTICE: CHILDREN'S NEWS ON TELEVISION

The Flemish television channel – KETNET – dedicated its children's news to the Brussels attacks. Their approach was nuanced, child-friendly and informative, and provided important tools for children (and parents) to cope with the events. Included in the programming were children's questions about the attacks, their safety, and other elements of children's concerns. The news channel was applauded by professionals and used as a training tool for crisis support providers.

Social Media

Unfortunately, traditional and social media do not always distribute accurate information. The impact of receiving misleading information or rumors - about victims and their loved ones - cannot be underestimated. In the search for details about a loved one's safety, images and misinformation can be hurtful, traumatic and confusing. As trusted resources, government and established victim service organizations are able to give more accurate and measured information. While symposium attendees generally agreed on the risks of using social media, they also agreed that after terrorist attacks social media could be an asset in disseminating information.

Helplines

The value of a good helpline was reiterated throughout the symposium. Helplines should be victim-centered with appropriate technical and human resources. The following guidelines on good crisis helplines based on worldwide-shared experiences:

GOOD PRACTICE: SOCIAL MEDIA EXPERTS PROVIDING TARGETED INFORMATION

After the 2016 Brussels terrorist attack, the Belgian government immediately set up a center to track social media, so that responders were aware of the concerns of the wider populations, as well as tracking the rumors and false information disseminated after the attack. Targeted information was supplied to address the broader concerns, and to ensure accurate information was distributed via social media messaging and in the public speeches given by politicians.

IN SOME COUNTRIES,
HELPLINE CALL
RESPONDERS HAVE
NEEDED SUPPORT
FOR SECONDARY
TRAUMATIZATION
BECAUSE, AS THEY
ADMIT, THEY WERE
NOT ADEQUATELY
PREPARED FOR
DEALING WITH
VICTIMS AND PEOPLE
IN SUCH DISTRESS.

- Register calls – Incoming calls should be registered to enable follow up. Victims of different attacks reported that they had to recount repeatedly their story when calling crisis helplines multiple times for news of their loved ones. Service providers should develop an effective way of recording information to prevent victims from repetitious questioning. Several experts acknowledged that those answering crisis helplines caused confusion by recording callers or victims' names multiple times with different surname spellings.
- Call back – For victims and next of kin, a crisis helpline should follow up on questions and information requests and call back with answers.
- Having the right staff in place – Emergency helpline staff should be trained to assist people in crisis, especially those who are terrorist attack victims. Call responders should be rigorously educated on what information to provide and how to provide it. Training and supervision not only help victims and others affected, but can also lessen burnout in those answering the phones.
- Capacity – Planning and preparation is crucial to ensure that after an

- incident there is the capacity to receive incoming phone calls
- Coordinated - The helpline should be in close coordination with other relevant actors such as support providers and law enforcement agencies.
 - Available – Crisis helplines should remain open for as long as the crisis takes. 'It is not acceptable for a crisis helpline to close overnight the evening of an attack'.
 - Multiple languages – Information should be available in multiple languages. Given the nature of many recent terrorist attacks, it is

GOOD PRACTICE: HELPLINE OFFERING EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ON THE SHORT AND LONG TERM

NATAL's Helpline offers emotional support for people who are injured physically and/or emotionally affected by terror attacks in Israel. From the moment callers contact the Helpline, they are welcomed into a supportive environment, and are treated with care and empathy. During crises, the phone intervention enables articulation of emotions, distress, anxiety and confusion. It provides support, psycho-education, information and guidance. Many callers are provided with additional calls whenever they need further help.

foreseen that there will be a considerable number of foreign victims involved. Ensure crisis helpline staff are able to provide information tailored to cross-border victims.

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At 22h that evening the crisis helpline all of a sudden stopped working. An answering machine said we should call back tomorrow morning. At that moment you feel completely lost.

Information on billboards

Information can be provided at transport hubs (ranging from international airports to local bus stations).

Example: After the Brussels attacks, victim support information was available in the metro stations. While the information was of value to many of those affected, understandably, some victims and their families reportedly refrained from using public transportation (the site of one of the bombs) after the attacks happened.

GOOD PRACTICE: SYSTEM OF LAW ENFORCEMENT TO BACK UP THE CRISIS HELPLINE

In the UK, when the call center receives questions about missing family members, police detectives working in coordination with the center are ready to carry out searches for the missing. This arrangement avoids family members having to look for their loved ones in hospitals or at the scene – identified as a recurring issue after many attacks.

III. BASIC PRINCIPLES WHEN PROVIDING INFORMATION TO VICTIMS

Clear and trustworthy information:

- Clear and simple – Information should be provided in a way that people of different linguistic, intellectual, cultural, and social backgrounds can understand. Using grammar and vocabulary that is clear and easy to understand will help readers digest the information.
- Direct – Victims are looking for clear information, thus being clear and direct is very important.

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What you don't need is someone who is schmoozing; victims need someone who is direct and will give the information you need, show those affected that the situation is being managed and tell victims what is being done to identify loved ones

- Differentiated – Communication cannot be offered from a one-size-fits-all approach. Different groups have different needs for information. Special attention should be given to developing appropriate information for the wider population and for children.
- Reassuring – Different experts reiterated the need to communicate to victims that the situation is being managed. This does not mean that all victim questions must be immediately answered or that there is a solution for every request. It means that the victim is told (or possibly shown) what is going on, how answers are being sought, what the next steps are, and even why answers cannot be provided at the time. For victim's families, there are long hours and days of uncertainty causing feelings of being out of control, helpless and hopeless. Victims seek someone who seems to be in charge: 'We are missing someone who can manage the situation'. As one of the experts stated. 'We, as the authorities, have to take management of the situation, if we don't do it who will? And the good news is: You can start working on that before something happens.'
- Unfortunately, the authorities are sometimes unable to provide the immediate information the community needs. It is necessary for politicians, support providers and law enforcement agencies to provide the appearance that the situation is being managed.



Try to show support by showing that you are managing the situation. Propose a next step, let the victim know that you are not just standing there. You have to show that you are managing it because the victim is completely lost.

- Reliable and trustworthy – Information should come from a reliable source and be expressed in a way that instills trust. After a terrorist attack, information supplied by different sources in different ways overwhelms victims, so accuracy and timeliness are paramount. An important guiding rule is that information builds trust; therefore,

official sources must be effective, trustworthy and truthful.

Sometimes victims are overwhelmed with information from different sources and feel distrustful of information given to them.

Example: After the MH17 incident, victims were contacted airline companies offering them money. While this is a normal process under the Montreal treaty, victims did not trust these offers. Victim Support Netherlands was there to help victims make sense of what was being offered, including information about the ramifications of accepting or rejecting the offers.

When victims ask 'what do you know about my loved one?' they should be told the truth. A key law enforcement officer at the symposium admitted that police also struggle with this query, as it is sometimes difficult for law enforcement agents to give bad news.

Finally, many promises are made to victims in the aftermath of a terrorist attack: 'We won't forget you, you won't be a victim again, and you will get justice'. It is important to make only promises that can be kept.

Timing:

- Timely – Information should be provided in a timely fashion. Questions from victims need to be answered quickly and accurately.
- Repeated – Different experts emphasized that information to victims should be provided repeatedly. Given the trauma they have endured, victims are often unable to digest information initially or even as time goes on.
- Ongoing and long term – Victim support providers, law enforcement agencies and government officials should stay in touch with victims over the long term and guarantee continuity of information provision. Information should be provided at frequent intervals. Understanding the psychosocial and social situation helps to avoid information overload. Prioritization during preplanning is therefore necessary.

Responsive and victim-oriented information:

- Empathic - All information given must contain not only the substance but also address emotions at the same time. Be empathic when providing the information.
- De-stigmatizing - Information should be provided in a way that does not stigmatize victims and should foster the idea that they can find help. Often people have difficulty labeling themselves as victims, or don't realize they might need or have the right to help.

- Responsive – Information provided to victims should not be merely passive and standardized. After a terrorist attack, victims need to be able to ask specific questions that pertain to their situation. As one expert clearly stated: ‘Get ready to answer questions victims might have’.

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When providers give over-information, the victim can't take it in, you can't concentrate, and you are having such a big issue you have to deal with that you don't care about stock answers or websites. You want a direct answer.

- It is important to be not only responsive to victims who ask questions and need tailored answers but also to listen to victims when they have things to say. Victims need a platform to speak.
- Pro-active: In addition, actively seeking information is an immense hurdle for many victims (and other people) after a terrorist attack, so a pro-active communication approach is necessary.
- Trauma-informed – It is important to understand the interconnectedness of trauma with the victims' experience. Understanding the impact of trauma, and how it can affect victims' ability to concentrate on large quantities of information, should inform the provision of information.
- Ask victims how they want to communicate – After a terrorist attack it is very likely that there will be large amounts of information given to victims over the long term. In addition, for undetermined periods, there may not be any new information and victims may not appreciate contact that can be re-traumatizing while lacking any significant new information. Support providers and government agents should plan how to provide information that avoids inducing anxiety. The best source is the victim him/herself. Information providers should have an upfront discussion with victims about their preferences for receiving information. For example, providers should

ask: 'Do you want to get a call each time, receive a short email, or shall I call you once a month with a summary of information, even if there is nothing new?. After having these conversations, victims' preferences must be honored. Providers should also ask victims to identify situations when providers can deviate from those agreements.

- If there is no answer to give, keep on communicating – Victims need to be kept informed, and if specific answers are not available, communication has to be about the process being followed and how answers or solutions are found. An expert mentioned that a key principle of conducting hostage negotiations is always communicating what is being done to facilitate the demands of the hostage taker. That lesson should also inspire provision of information to victims of terrorism.



You've always got something to tell a family, even if you have nothing. You can always tell them what you are doing.

- Guidance – Providing information in different ways is necessary, but it is also important to have a guide through the process. The help of a trusted individual or organization can assist victims in making sense of the information provided.
- Evaluation – It is not possible to communicate properly and know that the information has truly met its objective without evaluating the process and its outcome. Talking to victims about what they received, what they understood and how that helped is essential to developing good practices. Information providers should organize feedback loops.



There were families who did not open letters for four weeks. You have to make sure that the information you provide reaches victims. This may mean making repeated outreach

Privacy:

Think of privacy - How do privacy laws affect what information can be provided? In most countries, privacy is a major issue and laws may prohibit the sharing of information with other entities. Government officials and support providers must determine, ahead of time, how to comply with privacy regulations while sharing the information needed to respond to victim needs. Developing agreements on this topic is needed to ensure that victims are protected, but not prevented from receiving needed information.

D. PREDICTABLE CHALLENGES: COMMUNICATION

MASSIVE NUMBER OF INBOUND CALLS FROM FAMILIES, FRIENDS AND PUBLIC

After a terrorist attack most countries will open a crisis helpline to answer questions from both victims and the general population. Experiences shared during the symposium illustrated some of the challenges victims encountered with helplines: limited operating hours; receiving voice recorded messages; operators who are not trained and without empathy; being asked to tell their story repeatedly or being promised a return call that never happened.

VICTIMS' PRIMARY NEED FOR INFORMATION

Victims need information, quickly, clearly and throughout their healing process. As discussed above, victims need information about what is happening, where to get information, where to find support, what

happened to their loved ones, how to deal with practical issues, and what their rights are.

FROM AN OFFICIAL SOURCE, AS SOON AS IT BECOMES AVAILABLE, BEFORE THE MEDIA RECEIVES IT

Inaccurate information reaches victims through a variety of sources, so being presented with conflicting information can be very confusing for victims, especially at such a traumatic moment.

E. PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

DETERMINE WHETHER TO SET UP A HELP LINE

Determine upfront when and how a crisis helpline will be established, for how long it will exist and how it will be managed.

HAVE PROFESSIONALS ANSWER VICTIMS' QUESTIONS

The helpline call-takers that respond to victims should be trained professionals.

LINK THE HELPLINE WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Supporting the helpline, law enforcement agencies and support services should provide identification and information assistance.

DEDICATED WEBSITE

Victims can be provided with clear, accessible, trustworthy information through a dedicated website where facts from official sources are posted before being released to the press. A good example is the MH17 website that was developed by Slachtofferhulp Nederland and the Arq Foundation. The website framework updated with specific attack information can be posted online within hours of an attack.

COMMUNICATE EVEN WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE NEWS

As a support provider or government it is important to maintain contact with victims even if there isn't anything new to share.

COMMUNICATE BASED ON THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS

For a discussion about victims' needs, for information and communication, and practical solutions to common challenges, see previous.

CONSIDER THOSE NOT PHYSICALLY PRESENT

When developing communication plans, consider providing appropriate information to those affected but not physically present at the scene of the attack.

F. SUPPORT

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We were not at wrong place at wrong time; that is what we have to explain to people – they [attackers] were at the wrong place at the wrong time, we were where we had to be.

No one expects to be affected by a terrorist attack. When it does happen, those affected need to figure out how to cope with its consequences, and will most likely need some form of support. Support needs can be diverse and include information, emotional and psychological assistance, financial support, practical assistance or other specialized support. Victims of terrorism may already feel disillusioned by the attack itself, but afterwards without required support to which they have a right, their feelings of anger and mistrust can be amplified. Research and experience shows that the practical difficulties encountered when trying to identify, access and obtain the right support can exacerbate the psychological consequences of the attack.

Terrorism victims have found it beneficial to have someone help them find their way navigating through the wide range of services and professional organizations. In the Netherlands, victims are appointed a case-manager, while in other countries like the United States they work with victim navigators, advocates, or case managers. These systems originate from the idea that victims need a guide through what can be a

maze of information, support, criminal proceedings, etc. Having the right support at the right time has proven to decrease the need for support at later stages. An important requirement for navigators is that they commit to supporting victims over the long term, enabling the navigators



I needed someone to hold my hand during the process.

to respond to the changing nature and intensity of needs.

Victims of terrorism have an elevated risk of suffering emotional and psychological trauma. Many victims suffer from post-traumatic stress symptoms like flashbacks, nightmares and irritability⁴. The actual development of post-traumatic stress symptoms can happen at any time, even 10 years later and can be “triggered” by other life events. Victims’ mental health needs can last for generations and might even have a trans-generational impact. Emotional and psychological support should be available immediately after the attack and for as long as it takes for those affected to recover.

It is not only victims at the attack site that can experience emotional and psychological effects. Reportedly, after 9/11, half a million people in Manhattan suffered PTSD⁵. An adequate response to the emotional consequences of attacks requires sensitivity to the needs of all those affected.

To ensure that the right support is provided at the right time, providers should take into account the wide range of emotional and psychological needs. Psychological first aid, with a main focus on psycho-education and assessment, can be very valuable. Many victims are not aware their symptoms are normal reactions to an abnormal situation. Informing them about potential ‘normal’ emotional and psychological reactions, and when to seek professional help, has been shown to prevent further needs.

When professional support is needed, finding the right help key: specialized trauma support should be in place to help those who develop post-traumatic stress disorder as some participants observed that, after terrorist attacks, mental health needs can exceed the capacity of traditional mental health care. Existing services often work very well under typical circumstances; however, after a large-scale disaster or terrorist attack, an unknown number of new patients may need specialized support, attention

⁴ American Psychiatric Association. (2013). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed.). Washington, DC

⁵ Galea, S., Boscarino, J. A., Resnick, H. S., & Vlahov, D. (2002). Mental health in New York City after the September 11 terrorist attacks: Results from two population surveys.

or assessment. Many mental health professionals are simply not trained in disaster or trauma care, but the limited capacity of traditional mental health care can be complemented by what one participant called ‘funky methods of care’ that are embedded in a stepped care response. This concept means looking at different models of care, where non-traditional groups can be quickly mobilized. For example, school teachers or hair dressers can be trained to be support victims, not by providing therapy, but to engage, recognize, inform and refer those suffering symptoms to appropriate services.

One psychological and social consequence of being a victim of terrorism mentioned frequently during the symposium is the feeling of being lost and lonely. The impact of this feeling of isolation on victims’ recovery and trust can be substantial. At the symposium, multiple attendees expressed a concern that responders should pay more attention to providing better services to address feelings of isolation.

In addition to helping people recover after a terrorist attack, providing preventative support can be an important protective factor. Organizations like Israel’s NATAL support the wider population in coming to terms with their situation and help people discover ways to recover from the event,

GOOD PRACTICE: BUILDING RESILIENCE

NATAL’s work emphasizes helping communities take proactive steps to strengthen emotional strength before traumatic events occur. Community leaders and key individuals such as executive staff, first responders and educators, must act as “anchors” during times of crisis. Pre-Planning emergency protocols and training leadership to maintain stability helps to facilitate the return to routine from a state of turmoil. NATAL’s resilience programs focus on providing participants with practical tools for self-dependency in routine and emergency situations. They also learn specialized coping techniques for working with traumatized individuals and their families.

and find resolution and peace.

Victims also need practical support to deal with practical and administrative needs particular to their situation. Testimonies underscored how a victim can feel overwhelmed and lost in the aftermath of a terrorist attack and need someone who can assist with administrative and practical burdens. The burden of these bureaucratic and practical issues can be buffered by someone providing support for tasks such as managing bank accounts, transporting children to school, and filling out forms.

Training, recruitment, and deployment are key elements to ensure victims receive quality support. Participants agreed that not everyone has the necessary skills or knowledge to be a victim specialist. A clear description of capabilities, education and skills is necessary as well as a thorough selection process for volunteers is required to ensure the selection of the right candidates. The chosen specialists should then undergo training in the provision of support for victims of terrorism. While it was not the subject of in-depth discussion, attendees observed that an accreditation framework for professionals providing support for victims of terrorism is crucial. A well-thought out deployment strategy for both professionals and volunteers allows victim support workers to do their job to the best of their ability.

G. PREDICTABLE CHALLENGES: MANAGEMENT OF VICTIM/FAMILY RESPONSE

CONVERGENCE OF FAMILIES ON SCENE

Multiple families are affected and uncertain of their loved ones' fate after large-scale terrorist attacks. In order to obtain information it is necessary to set up a family assistance center as quickly as possible, to offer victims a place where they can access support and up-to-date factual news.

CONVERGENCE OF SUPPORT PROVIDERS ON SCENE

Some government officials and support providers spoke about the difficulties encountered when a large number of 'spontaneous' support organizations and professionals converge on the scene. Often the immediate response is organized according to a response plan and spontaneous helpers sometimes make it more difficult for professional

first responders to focus on helping the victims instead of addressing new offers for help.

SECURITY AND PRIVACY

In the aftermath of an attack, information about victims is critical; however, it can be challenging to share information while respecting victims' privacy. Often responders are not familiar with current privacy laws and what can be shared. Some entities may refuse information sharing because of confusion about privacy regulations.

PERSONAL EFFECTS MANAGEMENT

Victims' personal effects are important to them and to their next of kin. It can be difficult to link personal effects to individual victims and is a challenge as personal effects should be returned to the owner as soon as possible. However, it can be difficult to identify next of kin and return such effects in a sensitive way, particularly over the long term.

SITE VISITS

Victims and families might find it meaningful to visit the site where the attack took place, although if there has been considerable damage visits might not be possible immediately after the attack. Government officials and support providers should determine when they will allow site visits by those directly affected by the attack and who should be responsible for organizing the visits.

H. PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

SET UP AGREEMENTS ON SHARING INFORMATION AFTER A TERRORIST ATTACK

Determine in advance of an attack how information can be shared between services, government officials and even the judiciary. Sharing information over official channels is essential and has proven to be challenging. Collaboration with foreign governments and support providers should be carried out in the preparatory phase to determine how information will be shared.

HOW TO SET UP FAMILY ASSISTANCE CENTER RESOURCES

The United States Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) has developed an online toolkit on Helping Victims of Mass Violence and Terrorism which includes guidance on how to set up a family assistance center (<https://www.ovc.gov/pubs/mvt-toolkit/about-toolkit.html>).

PARTNERSHIPS TO SET UP FAMILY ASSISTANCE CENTERS

Experience and coordination with other organizations are required in setting up a family assistance center quickly. In the U.S., the FBI has been working with the American Red Cross for years and they are able to set up promptly family assistance centers in the immediate aftermath of an attack. In Belgium, psychosocial support units, made up of volunteers who can establish family assistance centers, are set up in each town within hours after the attack.

RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT CRISIS PLANS

Governments and support providers should be told about all existing crisis plans to ensure that each partner involved knows what they should do to ensure quality victim support.

INVEST IN RETURNING PERSONAL EFFECTS

The FBI, like other law enforcement and investigative authorities, tries to ensure a humane and empathic return of personal effects. A structured and meticulous registration, archiving and returns system allows the majority of victims to retrieve their salvaged personal belongings. Being able to recover possessions can form an important part of the victim's healing process.

I. COMPENSATION

Compensation can serve a double purpose by ideally covering immediate material damages and longer-term costs, and at the same time serving as a form of acknowledgment and recognition. Compensation should be adequate and its payment at least partially ensured immediately after the attack.

The financial impact of being a victim of a terrorist attack can be extensive and overwhelming. Financial needs may present themselves in diverse areas both immediately after an attack (travel costs, new clothes, etc.)

as well as in the long term (medical costs, costs of home alterations for victims with disabilities, professional reorientation, etc.). Financial support is therefore required to cover a myriad of expenses. Efficient and victim-focused systems of compensation for those involved in terrorism attacks are essential.

In order to provide compensation, governments have to define who is a victim of the terrorist attack. Compensation can be given by the state, courts, benefits in kind or crowd-funding, but state compensation may differ in how and how much compensation is offered to each victim. For example, in the United States, each state has a different compensation scheme. Symposium attendees suggested that it would be helpful to streamline compensation, or establish a minimum standard for accessing compensation, across countries or regions. This topic is currently being studied at EU-level by Mm Joëlle Milquet, special advisor to the European Commission on compensation to victims of crime.

Compensation can be provided through monetary payments or reimbursements; however, symposium attendees also explored how non-financial benefits can serve as restitution or recognition. Examples of such benefits include medical assistance, payment of phone bills, mortgage payments, and heating payments.

Although an in-depth plenary discussion on compensation was not part of the symposium, attendees identified some of the issues related to victim compensation observed in their countries:

- If victims receive compensation from other sources, they may feel additionally victimized if asked to reimburse part of the compensation received from the state;
- In some countries, the administrative and procedural burdens for victims to obtain compensation are onerous;
- The amounts provided through state compensation are negligible;
- In some countries, like the Netherlands, a legal representative for the family has to be appointed to receive compensation. This requirement could place the representative in a difficult position as he or she may have to divide the compensation offered amongst family members.

Experts mentioned the possibility of providing victims with immediate financial assistance though they asked themselves whether this truly constitutes an appropriate form of compensation.

J. PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

Peer support groups where victims can come together to discuss their experiences and support one another are particularly common in cases of mass-victimization, such as natural disasters, air crashes or terrorism. Other groups of victims also form peer support groups. Peer support groups are particularly valuable as they offer a forum for understanding shared experiences.

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After the attacks we felt lonely. You are having such pain not understanding what is happening so you really need to talk to people that understand you. After meeting other victims you finally feel: “someone understands what we talk about... it is like finally finding a family.”

Both victims and professionals agree that peer to peer support is an important form of help for victims of terrorism. Psychosocial support is important, but many victims also find support they need in peer support groups. Some of the identified advantages of a peer support group is that:

- It is open and victims can join and participate on the level desired;
- It provides a space to find strength and empathy, even when others around the victim might have stopped showing the empathy needed;
- It brings together people who understand the situation.
- Currently there are far more opportunities to create and maintain peer support groups than there were 10-15 years ago. Digital peer support groups can be formed through social media platforms like Facebook. Support providers should proactively think about

opportunities that social media offers in bringing victims together while still recognizing the need for qualified professional involvement in the group so as not to re-traumatize or take advantage of vulnerable people.

K. ACCESS TO JUSTICE

For many victims accessing justice and truth is an important part of their healing process. In most countries, a terrorist act will lead into an investigation and further criminal proceedings.

After terrorist acts, especially mass-scale attacks, facilitating access to justice for all victims is a complex process. One factor is that many victims of terrorist attacks may not be citizens or even residents of the country where the attack took place (see section on Cross-border victims). To provide victims of terrorism with real access to justice, it is necessary to empower them and support them throughout the proceedings. Apart from providing psychological and practical help, other support for participation in judiciary proceedings includes legal aid and assistance in bearing the cost of participation, such as travel and translation expenses. Criminal proceedings incur the risk of secondary victimization. Symposium participants identified a number of factors to consider when supporting victims' access to justice:

- Mental health – Criminal proceedings can be triggers for victims and might exacerbate mental health problems experienced by them. Support providers should prepare, protect and inform victims about these risks.
- Scale of the criminal proceedings – Investigations and trials after terrorist attacks require an adaptive approach as often the number of victims and people affected are much larger than in typical criminal proceedings. In some countries, prosecutors or law enforcement agents organize group information sessions. Attention to preparation and individual support before, during and after the sessions is

deemed important.

- Management of expectations – While intelligence agents, law enforcement, judiciary and government officials often invest time and resources in the investigation and prosecution, the limitations of criminal justice processes will not always provide the answers or justice victims seek. Often perpetrators die during attacks and cannot be brought to justice for their actions. In addition, there are large differences between countries in what rights and potential justice are available. Victims often compare criminal justice processes in other countries to their expectations for their own system, which might lead to disappointment. Support providers and government officials need to be proactive and honest in managing victim expectations.
- Not having a hearing – In some cases, criminal proceedings are not held, or do not include public hearings or opportunities for victims to be heard. In some countries, victims can petition for a public or private session to inform the court about their loved ones.

4



VULNERABLE GROUPS

A. CROSS-BORDER VICTIMS

In recent years, terrorist attacks have created more cross-border victims. Terrorists tend to target public areas where foreigners constitute a considerable part of those present (e.g. public transport near international buildings, airports). Discussions during the symposium again highlighted the challenges cross-border victims face and the need for particular attention to this vulnerable group. The nature of the scenario that inspired the table top exercise emphasized cross-border victims' differing but specific needs.

While experiencing the same needs as other terrorism victims, being a cross-border victim adds a layer of complexity to exercising rights and receiving the support needed. There are a number of characteristics that can pose a challenge to those providing victim support to cross-border victims:

- Language – Victims may speak different languages than the one used by local support services, government agencies, professionals and first responders;
- Culture – There might be cultural differences in communication

methods, mourning, and dealing with practical issues or emotional reactions;

- Distance – Cross-border victims will often return to their country of residence and the distance between the two countries can complicate their ability to access services, participate in criminal proceedings, and receive information;
- Practical difficulties – Victims of cross-border incidents will often face additional practical difficulties such as dealing with lost passports and incurring additional costs during their stay and in returning home;
- Familiarity with the context – When the victimization happens outside their own country, victims can be particularly vulnerable. They are not aware of the rules, legal frameworks, formal and informal support networks, rights, customs, etc. that make getting help more complicated;
- Timing – Victims of cross-border crimes will often go back to their home country as soon as possible. Support procedures and information should be rolled out swiftly to make use of the time the victims are in the country of attack.

If specific actions or measures are not put in place to take cross-border victim characteristics into account, those characteristics may hinder access to rights and services.

I. MEMORIALS

Cross-border victims need to be informed timely about the time and location of memorial services so they can arrange to attend. Experiences in different countries show that cross-border victims do not usually receive this information in time.

II. INFORMATION

Information often does not reach foreign victims. Preparation and response planning for information provision should include a clear strategy to make sure all victims – including cross-border victims – receive appropriate information. As all victims of terrorism, cross-

border victims have a strong ongoing need for factual reports not only immediately after the attack but also about future criminal proceedings and memorials, etc. To ensure information is accessible, governments and support providers should look for ways to overcome translation issues. (See Practical solutions on cross-border challenges below).

As cross-border victims will often quickly return home, it is critical that communication is initiated as soon as possible. This may involve intervention by the department of foreign affairs. Information strategies should not be created after an attack happens but should be included in pre-planning and standard procedures.

III. SUPPORT

Practical problems cross-border victims often face include being stranded in a country where they have no support network, need shelter, and returning home when they do not understand the official information provided.

In the process of identifying victims of a terrorist attack, links with foreign governments and consular services are crucial to ensure cross-border victims can be identified and to help with informing the cross-border victims' next of kin. Experiences from attendees illustrated that cross-border victims often fall through the cracks during the identification and registration processes, because they quickly leave the country or are unfamiliar with registration or complaint systems.

When a cross-border victim is identified (as in the UK) government agents will first contact the embassy of the deceased or injured victim before offering the support of a family liaison officer. If a family liaison officer works with a victim/family before contact with a relevant consulate/embassy, the nation concerned will be informed as soon as possible to ensure that diplomatic protocol is preserved and specific support can be provided to the persons affected.

Cooperative collaboration between embassies and NGO's is crucial as it increases the likelihood that victims will be referred at an early stage and promotes victim confidence in support services. Additionally, it can be useful if training of embassy staff can be carried out by support providers.

One challenge for cross-border victims is parity of services. Do victims in the home country get more or better quality services? How can we bring services to an equal level? Some experts suggest that all countries need to meet basic standards in supporting victims of terrorism. More international voices are needed to supplement the United Nations' efforts to encourage countries to meet those basic standards that will make cross-border cooperation easier.

To support cross-border victims by applying equal standards, flexibility is required. Each country offers different services, capabilities and rights. In some countries, the embassy will be the best entity to offer and transmit information; in others, support organizations might be better equipped to handle communication with victims.

IV. FINANCIAL

Cross-border victims will often incur immediate financial expenses that are higher than resident victims: paying for flights; finding unanticipated accommodation; buying food; making international phone calls; and paying medical bills that are not covered by insurance.

In some cases, charitable funds raised in the country where the attack happened might not necessarily reach foreign victims or foreign organizations supporting them. Thus, even though foreign victims might have greater financial needs, overall they may have less access to financial support.

V. ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Access to justice for cross-border victims is often even more complicated than for nationals or resident victims. Differences between rights and legal frameworks in a variety of countries may be confusing for cross-border victims and require good management of expectations. The lack of familiarity with a foreign system may hinder the cross-border victims' access to justice. Information about the judicial system and possible benefits and disadvantages of participating in the criminal proceedings should be thoroughly explained at all the stages of the criminal process to help cross them make informed decisions.

Building cross-border victims' trust in the government and judicial system

is pivotal to accessing justice. Some victims have an inherent distrust of governments and justice systems stemming from experiences in their own country. Others will fear participating in the criminal proceeding because they fear being deported. During the symposium, and inspired by the scenario, discussions revealed a number of potential challenges for cross-border victims in a multi-country attack (See annex).

One good practice that was mentioned repeatedly is a program operated by the National Security Division at the U.S. Department of Justice. It provides victims with the necessary legal information and support after they fall victim to terrorism abroad (see box).

GOOD PRACTICE: OFFICE OF JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF OVERSEAS TERRORISM (DOJ/OVT)

The U.S. Department of Justice's DOJ/OVT (<https://www.justice.gov/nsd-ovt>) has assisted U.S. victims of terrorist attacks in many different countries over the mid to long term by providing information about the foreign criminal justice system and support for victim participation in the foreign proceedings. The office works closely with U.S. government and local national counterparts to advocate for U.S. victims of overseas terrorism to the extent allowed by foreign law. Former criminal prosecutors who have expertise in criminal procedures and victims' rights in justice systems around the world staff the office.

Empowering cross-border victims to exercise their rights and get support requires preparation. An established relationship between government based victim assistance programs and respective professionals from NGOs is key, as is building collaborative strategies before an attack happens. The INVICTM symposium supports collaboration between professionals from many countries and could be a foundation for more formal agreements and standards in the future.

VI. PREDICTABLE CHALLENGES: CROSS BORDER VICTIMS

INFORMATION IS NOT AVAILABLE IN A LANGUAGE A VICTIM UNDERSTANDS

Information for victims is often only provided in the national language.

This leads to many cross-border victims not fully understanding the information they receive.

INFORMATION PROVISION DOESN'T TARGET CROSS-BORDER VICTIMS

Information for victims is often provided through channels and communication tools that are principally targeting nationals through use of national press and TV stations. Current methods of contacting foreign victims do not seem capable of making the information easily accessible.

CROSS-BORDER VICTIMS NEED VICTIM SUPPORT

Cross-border victims have the same basic needs for practical, social, psychological and financial support as other victims. Providing support services to these victims often requires collaboration between the support organizations in the country where the attack happened and the country where the victim resides. Currently, professionals report that support is not being offered on a consistent basis in each country with some countries having more services while others have fewer. The quality of services also varies, and it is challenging to ensure that the support offered and referred to is of appropriate quality. Some victims report that they are not offered much support in their home countries, or that it is of a different standard to that provided in the country where the attack happened. On occasion, it may be best for the victims' Embassy and home country government to help its nationals.

CROSS-BORDER VICTIMS WILL HAVE ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL NEEDS

Cross-border victims often incur additional financial expenses. They often need additional financial support to deal with the consequences of the attack. Foreign victims may not have the same rights to compensation or support as national victims. In some cases, charitable funds raised in the country where the attack happened might not necessarily reach foreign victims or foreign organizations supporting them. All funding may go to national organizations. Thus even though foreign victims might have greater financial needs, they might have less access to financial support

CROSS-BORDER VICTIMS PARTICIPATING IN MEMORIALS

Cross-border victims often receive information on memorial services too late to attend the event. Typically, there is no available financial support to attend such memorials. Some countries do not consider the possibility

of participation in either the development of the program or attendance at the event.

CROSS-BORDER VICTIMS HAVE DIFFERENT RIGHTS

In each country, victims of terrorism will have different rights to information, support, financial support, compensation, medical assistance, access to justice, and participation in the criminal proceedings. The differences between justice systems can be very complex and confusing for victims, hindering their efforts to access justice and receive information. In some cases, local and foreign lawyers appear on the scene of the attack providing misleading information and encouraging unrealistic expectations about possible compensation.

VII. PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

HAVE A POOL OF PROFESSIONALS SPEAKING DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

Some law enforcement agencies rely on police officers who are able to speak foreign languages. Officers are registered in an online system indicating the languages they speak to make them easily accessible. The UK has such a registry of officers who speak languages other than English. If, after an attack, there is a need for large numbers of police officers who speak one particular non-native language a request can be quickly sent out to those officers.

TRANSLATE INFORMATION IN ADVANCE

Governments can translate standard documents, information leaflets or letters ahead of time to ensure that when an attack happens those items are immediately available.

GO ABROAD

Navigators and family liaison officers can travel to the country where their nationals are victims of terrorism. They can offer support, information, facilitate repatriation and guide victims through the foreign system.

COLLABORATE WITH EMBASSIES

After terrorist attacks some governments, like the UK, will contact all embassies in the country to ask them to check in with their nationals who are in the country. This process facilitates identifying any foreign victims. Embassies and consular services are also key partners to ensuring information reaches foreign victims. The US Department of Justice makes an effort to meet with its own embassies in countries where there have been frequent attacks in the past.

TRAINING OF CONSULAR SERVICES

Some countries involve victim specialists in training embassy staff on working with victims of terrorism. In the UK, police officers are embedded in the embassies to identify what training is required for staff to respond to terrorist attacks. Other countries offer short training courses mainly focused on victim assistance referrals and resources in the country.

AGREEMENTS WITH FOREIGN ACTORS

Governments and support providers can develop strategies and agreements to facilitate sharing of data while respecting the privacy of victims.

MAP EXISTING SUPPORT

In the preparatory phase, it is important to identify organizations and relevant contact persons in different countries to ensure that foreign victims can access services when they return home. For example, Victim Support Europe has developed a listing of all victim services in Serbia, which is available through an interactive map. This map provides information to help victims find the most convenient and appropriate services for them.

COLLABORATION WITH BUSINESSES

Cross-border victims may have additional practical needs after being victimized in a foreign country. Some support organizations develop collaborative agreements with hotels and restaurants that in their turn offer free accommodation or meals.

INTERNATIONAL BASIC STANDARDS OF VICTIM SUPPORT

Symposium attendees support the development of basic standards for terrorism victim support, implementation of the standards, and advocacy from international agencies to support adoption of the standards. Victim Support Europe is developing standards for victim support.

REMOTE SUPPORT

When the victim's home country does not have sufficient capacity to provide support, online or remote services might be a creative solution. Remote support can be a website, a helpline, an app, chat or video support. These support services are being implemented and further developed by organizations like NATAL and Weisser Ring in Germany.

COORDINATE SUPPORT TO FOREIGN VICTIMS

There is a need for better coordination between victim services in the country where the victim resides and authorities in the country where the attack took place. Some countries fly their victims out straight away, which may benefit the victims but the national police in the country where the attack happened may lose contact with those victims. Collaboration and coordination might improve the support provided while ensuring victims provide and receive all the information needed.

HAVE FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN FAMILY ASSISTANCE CENTER

Need to have the right agencies in the family assistance or survivor reception centers and thus the foreign office should be there to coordinate embassy communications.

CONTACT POINTS PER COUNTRY

Designate contact points in each country to facilitate formal communications with victims in their home country.

MAINTAIN INFORMATION ON RIGHTS

it is important to have readily available information on legal systems, rights, compensation and legal services for different countries across the world. Translated information provided in the national language facilitates victims' access to justice.

GOVERNMENT PAYS FOR TRANSLATION

To ensure victims understand the information provided during criminal proceedings, governments (of the country where the attack happened or the country of residence) should pay the translation costs for victims. The European Directive on Victims' Rights offers a strong legal framework to ensure victims are provided with translation and interpretation in a language they understand.

IF UNACCOMPANIED
CHILD VICTIMS
HAVE QUESTIONS
IMMEDIATELY AFTER
AN ATTACK, YOU
NEED A PERSON
WHO IS TRAINED TO
GIVE APPROPRIATE
ANSWERS

B. CHILDREN

Children form a separate vulnerable group as victims of terrorism. The particular needs of children depend on their age and development levels, but build on the general needs of all victims. Children require information in a form they can understand and does not further harm them. Communication for children is often offered through trusted adults and schools.

Symposium participants discussed the care for unaccompanied children or children who have lost parents in the attack. Experts recommend that children be accompanied from the moment of the attack and for as long as needed. The person accompanying the child should be someone the child can trust, perhaps a police officer, and not necessarily a social worker; however, it is important that the person be trained to talk to children in a crisis.

C. SUPPORT PROVIDERS AND FIRST RESPONDERS

There is a strong need to support first responders as they are often overlooked when identifying and supporting those affected by a terrorist attack. To be able to provide required support to first responders one should work towards a change in perspectives, attitudes, and available support.

First responders as victims

In the United States, the 1996 Oklahoma City bombing was the first large-scale domestic terrorist attack that led the federal government to fund a community mental health response. Increasingly in the years after the attack, rescue workers and their family members sought help for mental health services. Studies of the victim response found that an often overlooked population affected by the Oklahoma City bombing includes those who responded to the crime and offered some measure of assistance with the rescue-and-recovery efforts. Along with working

THERE NEEDS TO BE
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TO CHANGE.

under very difficult and dangerous conditions, some rescue workers were injured and many handled bodies or body parts. As a direct result of their experiences in Oklahoma City, experts predict as much as 20 percent of the 12,984 rescue workers and volunteers may need help in dealing with the psychological impact.

Change in attitude

Improving assistance for support providers requires a change in attitude towards psychological impact and care after a terrorist attack. First responders are known for not being among the first to seek help. To lower the perceived stigma of seeking help, it is important to foster the idea that the psychological consequences of a terrorist attack are a normal reaction to an abnormal event.

Institutions should fight misconceptions that first responders continue working immediately after attacks do not need help. Increasing understanding about the normal process of trauma and recovery is key to lowering the threshold for seeking help, even after some time has passed.

First responders' exposure to repeated attacks can create an additional vulnerability. One must take into account, first responders and volunteers' exposure, both psychological and physical, to substances like asbestos or other carcinogens and provide ongoing information about the impact this may have on their health.

Lower threshold to services

Stigma, hierarchy and a lack of support structures might discourage first responders from getting the help they need. Recently, improved awareness has led to initiatives to mandate employers to provide services to all first responders (see box).

GOOD PRACTICE: MANDATE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT TO GET SUPPORT

Recently, some U.S. employers have commissioned support services for all first responders. If this becomes common practice, the stigma associated with asking for help may be diminished. It is important to consider which organizations offer support to law enforcement agencies as experience has shown that the provision of in-house services negatively affected usage.

II. PREDICTABLE CHALLENGES: IMPACT ON FIRST RESPONDERS

FIRST RESPONDERS WILL BE IMPACTED

First responders and service providers, including volunteers and spontaneous responders, will be psychologically impacted by working during and in the aftermath of a terrorist attack. Research shows that even on-call professionals and volunteers instructed to be ready during an attack will have some psychological impact.⁶

STIGMA OF SEEKING HELP

Many symposium participants recognized there is a fear of a stigma connected with seeking support by law enforcement officers or support providers. Responders and support providers may avoid accessing help and this could lead to more significant problems over the long term. The lack of organizational leadership that promotes getting psychological help can make it even more difficult for first responders to do so.

⁶ Responding to Terrorism Victims: Oklahoma City and Beyond, p.19, U.S. Department of Justice, October 2000 citing Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, May 31, 1998.

II. PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

MANDATE SUPPORT SERVICES FOR FIRST RESPONDERS AND SUPPORT PROVIDERS

Support services for first responders can be authorized by employers. Embedding the services in the structure of law enforcement agencies may reduce the stigma of seeking help.

MONITOR AND SUPPORT FOR RESPONDERS AND VICTIM SERVICE PROVIDERS DURING AND AFTER INCIDENT

Some law enforcement agencies train peer supporters to provide front line assistance to colleagues and help them find the way to professional support specializing in assisting first responders.

PSYCHOEDUCATION ON VICARIOUS TRAUMA

Educating first responders and other support providers about secondary trauma, how to prevent it, and how to identify its symptoms has been shown to help prevent burnout and further psychological issues.

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CHAPTER FIVE

PRINCIPLES OF SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF MASS TERRORISM

Throughout the symposium, experts identified principles for the quality care for victims of terrorism immediately after the attack and in the long term.

A. CONTINUITY OF NEEDS AND CARE

For victims of terrorism, short and long-term needs are intertwined. How the immediate response is conducted will unavoidably have long-term consequences. Continuity of care represents obligations to victims and society on the understanding that everyone can be a victim. Responding to the needs of victims requires accompanying them as needed on their life-long journey.

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Providing proper support at early stages can limit long term needs – because needs can be exacerbated by anger and resentment from earlier failures.

Losing someone/ being traumatized as a victim of terrorism is like breaking the chain of life. The services provided to victims should address that rupture to foster healing. Continuity is about helping victims live, heal and become a part of society as many victims feel that what happened to them separates them from other people. Victims can feel let down by society because of the attacks, but lack of support and governmental action can compound those feelings and amplify their anger and mistrust. Some principles of providing continuity of care were mentioned:

PROACTIVE AND TRUSTWORTHY

Reach out – It seems clear that victims of terrorist attacks need a proactive response. They often don't have the psychological strength to look for help in an often complex and unknown support structure. Support providers should reach out to victims and start to understand their needs.

Don't give up - There will be times when service providers contact victims but don't hear back. Initially, victims may not be ready to accept support, but later they may be open to receiving help. It is important to understand that interest in and capacity to receive support or information can come and go.

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At our helpline in Israel we keep on calling each victim every week until the time that victims let us know they don't want it. Some victims never answered but afterwards they have said “I saw you called and I'm very happy you did”. People may say they don't want to be contacted but our experience shows that it's not just that they don't want it, often it's just not the right moment or they don't want this particular contact.

Keep your promises – Support workers should keep promises made immediately after the attack took place. A supportive relationship is built on trust, and keeping promises to victims is extremely important in establishing trust. A lack of trust can prevent victims from accessing support.

HUMANE AND EMPOWERING

Have human contact – Letters or leaflets can't be the primary form of communication, but rather should be a supportive tool. Personal contact, through a call or visit, is more effective than just giving them a leaflet that might become another paper in an extensive file.

Care – Support workers should show care and empathy for the individual needs of victims. Care and commitment can be expressed by being present, continuing pro-active outreach and following up with victims. This care and empathy can counter the feeling of being lost and lonely. A primary goal of support providers should be to convey the message, 'we care'. This means showing concern whilst respecting an individual victim's need to go through the grieving or healing process in their own way.

Strengthen – Victim support should not create a dependency whilst working to meet victim needs.

Give choices - In the first phase after an attack all help should be focused on specific needs of specific victims. There should be sufficient support offered and options available for everyone. Victims should be able to opt in, and make decision for themselves.

Respect "No" - It is important to respect when people refuse information or support.

CONTINUOUS AND FLEXIBLE

Continuity - Continuity is a foundation of the victims' healing process. This means support should be there over the life journey. There will always be moments in time, triggers, and anniversaries, when experiences will be relived and need support or when new events, divorce, or disease can trigger unforeseen trauma. Part of the continuity of care is conveying to victims that 'you are not forgotten – even if proceedings take years, administrative issues rise up, needs come and go – you are not forgotten'. For example, the UK family liaison officers provide assistance throughout the criminal proceedings and beyond, and the Office of Justice for Victims of Overseas Terrorism provides assistance in the long term and recognizes victims may need additional support services during a trial or upon the release of a perpetrator.

Assisting victims of terrorism can be a lifelong commitment, especially in the case of young children. As children become adults, their legal status changes and they may start to ask questions and have different needs. In some countries, like Belgium, when victims turn 18, they have the right to see the judicial file.

Flexibility and speed - Experts say that the pace of victims' needs accelerates after contemporary large-scale incidents.

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At victim support Netherlands we were involved in supporting families after a plane crash in the 80's. Then we told families to take two months before thinking about compensation. After MH17 [in 2015], within two days we already had questions on compensation. We see an increase in speed because people have more access to information. We have to be prepared for this. We have less time after an attack to determine how to support or which information to give so we have to be better prepared beforehand.

The sooner support providers act in the immediate aftermath of the attack, the less likely victims will need long term services. Acting quickly can lead to a reduction in the anger that can disrupt healing and create additional resource requirements.

ORGANIZATIONAL

Assessment - Service providers should have the capability to assess people's needs from the outset. To prevent further psychological harm, psychological first aid should be provided and assessments should determine whether referral to specialist support or therapy is required.

Visibility and accessibility – Victims from different countries told of difficulty finding out what services exist and how to access them. Some

support organizations make an effort to publicize their services and contact information.

One contact point - Having a one-stop-shop, case manager/navigator/advocate available over the long term is extremely valuable for victims. It does not have to be the same person, but it has to be the same organization so that victims can build trust. As the victim needs change over time, the support needs will change as well. Victims may need further guidance on how to address these changing needs. Having a trusted relationship with a certain professional or organization will greatly facilitate accessing additional information and support.

Case Management – Victim support providers and other professionals should take notes and keep a file so the victim doesn't have to repeat stories, needs and experiences every time.

Evaluation – Continuous evaluation should be an element of the long-term support. Find out 'what did we do right, wrong' and use that information to improve individual and strategic approaches to support.

B. VICTIM-CENTERED PERSPECTIVE

Too often, procedures for supporting victims are conceptualized from the point of view of governments or service providers. Many experts agree that this is not the right way to operate because the victim is not at the center. To deliver services that are effective in meeting victims' needs, planners must start from bottom and work their way up to determine organizational responsibilities. The victim's lens and voices of expert professionals in the field should be the basis for planning support services. Research shows that when victims are heard in criminal proceedings, whether they agree with the outcome they will be more satisfied with the judicial process and have more trust in criminal proceedings and government.

QUESTION: HOW DO
WE KNOW WHAT
VICTIMS NEED? MY
ANSWER: ASK THEM.

When it comes to providing support to an individual, it is important to understand that the healing process is different for everyone. It is important to see the individual; some people are more resilient than others are, but resiliency cannot be predicted. Experience shows that two individuals who are harmed in the same attack and go through very similar experiences will heal and process what happened very differently.

C. COORDINATION

To provide high quality and comprehensive support to victims of terrorism it is important to involve both NGOs and governments, dividing the huge amount of work between different bodies that have different strengths. The foundation for coordination is preparation. If strong networks are created the quality and timeliness of the response can be improved. A network can establish and implement basic standards.

Networks can support individual members with training and shared knowledge. The Family Liaison Service in the UK has provided multiple governments with training to help implement similar services in other countries.

Contact between trusted individuals and organizations facilitates referrals between victim support organizations in different countries. Governments tend to move slowly, and informal networks can make the

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After the MH17 incident we wanted to contact victim support in Indonesia and Malaysia but we couldn't find the right information and had to ask an International network to us provide with an email address of someone in the country. We as a global community can no longer accept amateurism, we should contact organizations before attacks happen. Victims can come from any part of the world so we should reach out to other parts of the globe that are not yet represented.

GOOD PRACTICE: INVICTM COLLABORATIONS

In the few years since INVICTM was established, its collaboration has led to some important successes:

- Amendments to the European Directive on Combating Terrorism were inspired by advice, best practices and lessons learned from INVICTM members. The quality and importance of the amendments were such that a large percentage of them were accepted after being introduced by Members of the European Parliament;
- After recent terrorist attacks in Europe and the US, international victims received timely, relevant, and translated information developed especially for foreign victims;
- Collaboration between INVICTM members resulted in recommendations and meetings with influential states prior to the revised UN Counter Terrorism strategy;
- INVICTM members facilitated support for victims of terrorism both in the countries where attacks happened and in victims' countries of residence

PLAN TODAY FOR AN
EVENT THAT WILL
HAPPEN TOMORROW.
DISCUSSING HOW YOU
WILL COLLABORATE
WILL PAY YOU
DIVIDENDS.

responses for information or support requests quicker and more flexible.

D. PREPARATION

As is clear throughout the findings, recommendations and good practices mentioned in this report, a key determinant to the quality of support for victims of terrorism is preparation. Interagency communication and network building is important, as it is crucial that everyone knows their roles to prevent people and organizations from hindering one another when an attack does happen.

Sue O'Sullivan stresses the vital importance of pre-planning any response to terrorist attacks and mass victimization. For good risk management, the basic questions to ask are:

- Did you have a plan?
- Did you practice the plan?
- Were the decisions you made reasonable given the information you had?

GOOD PRACTICE: HEALTH RESPONSE APP

SAMHSA Behavioural Health Disaster Response App

The free SAMHSA Disaster App offers first responders immediate access for any type of traumatic event at every phase of response, including pre-deployment preparation, on-the-ground assistance and post-deployment resources (<https://store.samhsa.gov/apps/samhsa-disaster>).

CitizenAID App

Another app that supports the population in preparing and reacting in case of an attack is the citizenAID which aims to reduce anxiety from difficult decision making in an unfamiliar situation. It helps the user to follow logical steps to do the right things in the right order.

The citizenAID App is free to all and is designed initially for use in the UK. Access is open internationally for the public, recognizing it contains detail that relates only to the UK (such as the emergency services phone number). A U.S. version is also available. <https://www.citizenaid.org/>

E. EVALUATION

Evaluation should be integrated into the provision of support to victims. After each incident, all partners should come together to share information and experiences with those who responded. Evaluation based on the perspective of each victim and community should inform the next response. The FBI trains its victim services response teams to talk about lessons learned. Their guiding principle is to strive to elevate the services for victims. Every time there is an incident, there will always be lessons to learn because each incident is different. One of the goals of INVICTM and the yearly INVICTM symposium is to leverage that knowledge to improve support for victims around the world.

There is a need for scientific research and quality evaluation to understand more about the needs of victims and the gaps that exist between those needs and the offered services. A significant challenge is the unpredictability of terrorist attacks and the research linked to them. Researchers should be proactive to prepare studies in advance and dissemination of the studies' findings about better practices and policies should be improved.

ANNEX 1

RESPONSES TO THE SCENARIO

Symposium Scenario – Who are victims?

Those identified as victims in the scenario were the deceased, the physically injured, the psychologically injured, the next of kin of the deceased and physically injured, passengers who were stranded, first responders – both professional and civilian, businesses and airlines, those who were at the scene five minutes before the attack, families in transit, victims of hate speech/hate crime e.g. from the perpetrator's ethnic group and other minorities.

Symposium Scenario – The challenges in the immediate response

Crisis response

- Access – how do we get in?
- Safety - Is it safe to go in? How do we evacuate buildings? Those who don't have physical injuries?
- Registration – how to register victims over different attack sites
- Coordination – who has jurisdiction after which attack, which protocols will be used, which hierarchy will be followed
- Place for families to go to get information and support
- Tracing system – focal point that receives all the information, victims can go there, instead of families going to hospitals. System constantly updated
- Proactive, calling after two hours, show care
- Coordinate spontaneous volunteers – plan in place on how to deal with volunteers
- Basic care – food, water, toilet facilities

Information

- Clear communication about what is going on
- Dedicated website to get available information
- Helpline for families and others affected
- Immediate information – about the fate of loved ones
- Information for wider public - Important to have immediate action to show the victims that officials are involved and aware of the need to support them, to show that the victims are not alone. Proactive communication with specific communities – to show they have the support. Messaging for politicians.

Support

- Medical - Triage of injured and deceased
- Victims want to leave as soon as possible. Some don't want support because they are traveling
- Dignity for deceased victims
- Unaccompanied minors – assistance for the children, safe place, first support guidance and counseling

Symposium Scenario – What are the challenges to access justice for cross-border victims?

Information

- Communication and notification – victims need information, they need an explanation of how the justice system works, the criminal proceedings and their rights to participate or attend hearings
- They should be informed about how and where they can receive support during proceedings
- Interrogation – Who carries out the interview, in which language and under which legal framework?

Investigation

- Evidence at the scene and witness statements – What is considered evidence in the country where the attack happened? Are there differences between countries of different attack sites?
- Whether or not the attacker is killed makes a difference to how the investigation is run in different countries
- Difference between who carries out the investigation and the investigative processing – in some countries information about the investigation is not available while in other countries it is
- Wrongfully accused. What happens when false information is spread in the media about assumed perpetrators?
- Different definition of terrorist attack – different national legal systems have different definitions of what constitutes a terrorist attack
- Jurisdiction – which country is in charge of what? Terrorism does not have international jurisdiction. For prosecution, the case is typically handled by the government in the country where the attack happened. The arrest can be dependent on the country where the alleged perpetrator is located.

Criminal Proceedings

- In cases with multiple site attacks there might be different trials held in different countries
- The criminal justice system may move at a slow pace – law enforcement agents need to gather evidence, which can prolong the process and is frustrating for victims who would like to see some resolution. Where are the accused – where will they be held and is there a possibility for extradition? Does where they are held influence the possibilities for compensation by the perpetrator?

- Language and translation – Does the victim have to pay for translation? In some countries only parts of the criminal proceedings will be translated
- Management of expectations – different legal systems will function differently from that which cross-border victims expect or are used to. Support providers need to explain why certain steps are taken in that particular situation
- Sentencing and release of the accused. In some countries, victims have rights to information about the release of the accused
- Different rules on aiding and abetting
- Definition and recognition of a victim – in some situations, an individual might not be considered a ‘victim’ in the country where the attack took place, but may be considered a victim under the laws in their home country
 - Participation in the criminal proceedings – differs between countries
 - Provision of translation services
 - Participation in criminal proceedings
 - Providing rights to family members of deceased individuals
 - Allowing victim impact information
- Trust in government, justice system, legal representation
 - Who do you trust
 - Fear of deportation – undocumented migrants
- Civil process – In some countries private suits will be held at the same time as the criminal suits.

Compensation

- Categorizations – Compensation rules may lead to inconsistent distributions of funds. For example, in many countries victims will receive higher compensation when killed by a terrorist. Foreign nationals who are victims of the same terrorist attack, may not be eligible for compensation and will be disappointed
- Compensation – For those categorized as a victim, who makes the decision about entitlement to compensation?
- Insurance - Some countries use insurance companies to oversee the compensation program
- Unjust enrichment – How does the country's compensation program deal with unjust enrichment and false claims?
- How to make a claim for compensation. In some systems victims must be parties to the criminal and civil case to claim compensation. Adhesion systems are much faster and victims are not required to retain an attorney to represent them because the prosecutor will help with the damages claim.

Legal Support

- Availability of support for witnesses
- Ability to have legal representation and legal aid
- Access to justice – do you need a lawyer to take part in the criminal proceedings?

ANNEX 2

COMPENDIUM OF RESOURCES ON SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF TERRORISM

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE OFFICE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME

Overview of resources: terrorism and mass violence

- OVC develops programs and initiatives to support victims of domestic and international terrorism, as well as victims of global crimes such as international parental child abduction and tourist-targeted victimization. Through its Federal International and Tribal (FIT) division, OVC offers assistance to these victims with a number of programs. This website offers an overview of OVC publications, programs and resources on terrorism and mass violence.

<http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/topic.aspx?topicid=1>

Toolkit on Helping Victims of Mass violence and Terrorism

- The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC)—in coordination with the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Office for Victim Assistance and the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Justice for Victims of Overseas Terrorism—developed this toolkit to help communities prepare for and respond to victims of mass violence and terrorism in the most timely, effective, and compassionate manner possible.

<https://www.ovc.gov/pubs/mvt-toolkit/about-toolkit.html>

The Vicarious Trauma Toolkit

- The Vicarious Trauma Toolkit (VTT) was developed by the Federal International and Tribal (FIT) division of the OVC on the premise that exposure to the traumatic experiences of other people—known as vicarious trauma—is an inevitable occupational challenge for the fields of victim services, emergency medical services, fire services, law enforcement, and other allied professionals; however, organizations can mitigate the potentially negative effects of trauma exposure by becoming vicarious trauma-informed. The VTT includes tools and resources tailored specifically to these fields that provide the knowledge and skills necessary

for organizations to address the vicarious trauma needs of their staff. To VTT, is searchable according to discipline and holds a comprehensive Compendium of Resources.

<https://vtt.ovc.ojp.gov/>

FBI VICTIM SERVICES DIVISION

Coping After Terrorism for Injured Survivors

- Handbook is intended to help understand reactions of injured survivors to an act of terrorism or mass violence, as a complement not a substitute for the role of professionals with expertise in counseling injured victims.

https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/coping_terrorism_injured.pdf/view

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We Regret to Inform You: Online training for law enforcement and others delivering death notification.

- The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Pennsylvania State University developed this no-cost, online training module for campus safety officers, law enforcement officers, victim advocates, chaplains, medical examiners, hospital personnel and anyone else who may have to deliver a death notification. The We Regret to Inform You training curriculum is built around a four-step process: plan, prepare, deliver, and follow-up. The 45-minute module includes instructional videos that demonstrate the use of best practices when making death notifications and covers the following topics: in person notification, remote notification, mass casualty incidents, social media, children, persons with disabilities, elderly, language barriers, deceased suspects, international considerations, cultural considerations, and victim assistance.

<http://www.deathnotification.psu.edu/>

GLOBAL COUNTERTERRORISM FORUM

Global Counterterrorism Forum Madrid Memorandum

- In July 2012, Spain hosted a high-level conference on victims of terrorism under the auspices of the GCTF Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Working Group. At this meeting, member states recognized the need to collaborate on developing a document outlining good practices for assisting terrorism victims. In addition, the Government of Spain circulated a draft document, “Madrid Memorandum on Good Practices for Assistance to Victims of Terrorism Immediately after the Attack and in Criminal Proceedings.” On November 7, 2012, experts from GCTF members met to discuss and refine this document.

https://www.thegctf.org/documents/10162/72352/13sep19_madrid+memorandum.pdf

VOICES OF SEPTEMBER 11TH

Preparing for After Resource Kit

- In 2014, VOICES completed Preparing for After, a Resource Kit that documents best practices in preparing for, responding to and recovering from acts of mass violence. The Resource Kit is based on extensive research and interviews conducted with those who responded to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the Oklahoma City bombing and the shootings at Virginia Tech, Northern Illinois University and in Tucson, Arizona. Funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, the project documents lessons learned that will guide service providers, organizations and government agencies in providing services to victims families, survivors and others impacted by traumatic events. Community leaders, emergency managers, law enforcement, mental health professionals and other key stakeholders will find this information useful in preparing for and responding to both the immediate and long-term needs of the community.

<http://voicesofsept11.org>

UK FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER (FLO)

Family Liaison Officer Guidance 2008

- Where there is a police investigation into the death of a human being, the police have a positive duty to communicate effectively and inclusively with the bereaved family. On most occasions this can be achieved by deploying a Family Liaison Officer (FLO). This document provides family liaison guidance in respect of the investigation and management of critical incidents, and also details how family liaison can prevent incidents from becoming critical in the first place.

<http://library.college.police.uk/docs/acpo/FLO-guidance-2008.pdf>

CANADIAN RESOURCE CENTRE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIMES

TerrorVictimResponse.ca

- In the event of a terrorist attack or mass victimization event in Canada, communities must be prepared to mitigate the negative effects on victims and survivors. TerrorVictimResponse.ca provides easy access to information resources for emergency management, law enforcement and government officials who may be required to deliver tangible support to persons harmed. Ensuring that victims and survivors can recover and normalize their lives is critical in fostering community resilience. Communities must be prepared to meet the immediate, intermediate and long-term needs of victims and survivors of terrorist acts/mass victimizations and can do so by incorporating victims into their official response plans. Victims and survivors must not be an afterthought.

<http://terrorvictimresponse.ca>

APAV

PAX Manual: Supporting Victims of Terrorism

- The Manual PAX – Supporting Victims of Terrorism was written by the Portuguese Association for Victim Support / Associação Portuguesa de Apoio à Vítima (APAV) with the purpose to present some procedures considered adequate in the assistance and support to victims and relatives and/or friends of victims of terrorist acts. This is a product of the PAX Project – On Victims of Terrorism (JLS/2007/ISEC/473), with the support of the European Commission – Programme Prevention of and Fight Against Crime (Council Decision 2007/125/

JHA of 12.02.2007), part of the general programme Security and Safeguarding Liberties. The Manual PAX is aimed at professionals who, throughout the European Union, at any time and in varied institutions and services, are or may come to be in contact with people affected by terrorist acts. Among these are victim support staff, police officers, health professionals, coroners, lawyers, judicial officers, magistrates and judges, social workers, etc.

http://www.apav.pt/pdf/Manual_PAX_EN.pdf

VICTIM SUPPORT ENGLAND AND WALES

Meeting the needs of survivors and families bereaved through terrorism

- This report presents VS's research findings on the support needs of survivors and families bereaved through terrorism. It examines the range and co-ordination of available services in England and Wales and, using examples of what we believe to be international good practice, looks at how the provision of support can ultimately be improved. At a time when the threat of terrorism to the UK is 'severe' and public concern is high, it aims to provide personal insights into the survivor's journey through the system, and to inform key agencies with a responsibility to deliver help and support about the shortcomings that have been identified through practice.

https://victimsupport.eu/activeapp/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/REPORT-FINAL-VS-survivors-and-families-bereaved-through-terrorism-report_final-Novemb....pdf

VICTIM SUPPORT NETHERLANDS AND PARTNERS

Information and Referral Centre MH17

- The aim of the Information and Referral Centre (IRC) is to provide information and advice to support the next of kin and others who knew the victims through the workplace, school or sports associations. At present you have a lot to deal with; you may feel overwhelmed by emotions and practical problems. It can be difficult to know who to approach with a particular issue. The IRC is a focal point for all your questions.

<https://www.slachtofferhulp.nl/en/Corporate/Calamiteiten/IVC-Planecrash-Ukraine/>

VICTIM SUPPORT EUROPE

Report: How can the EU and the Member States better help victims of terrorism?

- This study, commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the LIBE Committee, presents a glimpse into the international and selected national responses to the raising global threat of terrorism and the consequent increase in victimisation. The study is based on the research conducted on legislation and policy responses to the needs of victims of terrorism in Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Spain and the United Kingdom. The research and findings focus on the two main EU instruments in this field: the Victims' Rights Directive and the Directive on Combating Terrorism. Based on the findings of adequacy of response to the victims' needs, the study proposes a set of recommendations for the EU and the Member States legislative and policy response to better ensure the needs of victims of terrorism are well taken care of.

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/596805/IPOL_STU\(2017\)596805_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/596805/IPOL_STU(2017)596805_EN.pdf)

UNCCT

Good Practices Handbook to Support Victims' Associations in Africa and the Middle East

- The Handbook is the result of an inclusive and participatory process that gathered victims, experts and representatives from victims' associations from across Africa and the Middle East, many of them direct victims of terrorism. Despite their suffering and their loss, they have decided to act as game-changers for themselves and for others. The Handbook provides an opportunity to spread their knowledge and help other victims and victims' associations effect change. The Handbook seeks to provide practical guidance, knowledge and advice through a set of guidelines/good practices to victims' associations on how to support victims of terrorism in Africa and the Middle-East.

https://www.un.org/victimsofterrorism/sites/www.un.org.victimsofterrorism/files/oct-uncct-handbook_of_good_practices_to_support_victim27s_associations_-web.pdf