



21 August 2018. For the first time, the UN observes the International Day of Remembrance of, and Tribute to, the victims of terrorism. The new international day is observed on August 21, in order to honour and support victims and survivors of terrorism, and to promote and protect their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

“When we respect the human rights of victims and provide them with support and information, we reduce the lasting damage done by terrorists to individuals, communities and societies”, says UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, in his message for the day.

The story of Iryna illustrates the impact terrorism can have on a person’s life. The 37-year old mother got severely injured after a terrorist drove a lorry into a crowd at Drottninggatan in central Stockholm on 7 April 2017, killing five and injuring 14 others seriously. Her right leg was run over by the lorry, and as a result, her leg had to be amputated.

Iryna, originally from Ukraine, got a provisional residence permit in Sweden during the lawsuit

against the presumed terrorist. Her application for permanent residence on humanitarian grounds was rejected by Swedish authorities, and she will most likely have to leave the country.

“It feels like getting hit by the lorry again”, she says in an interview with Swedish media. “I need help, care and rehabilitation to cope”, she said.

UN Member States have the primary responsibility to support victims of terrorism and support their rights. Long-term multi-dimensional support including psychological, physical, social and financial support is essential for victims to heal and live in dignity. But many victims struggle to have their voice heard and need support.

“Supporting victims and their families is a moral imperative, based on promoting, protecting and respecting their human rights. Caring for victims and survivors and amplifying their voices helps to challenge the narrative of hatred and division that terrorism aims to spread. We need to provide victims with long-term assistance, including financial, legal, medical and psychosocial support”, said UN Secretary General Antonio-Guterres.

An increasing number of countries around the world are today affected by terrorism. Europe and the Nordic countries have experienced several attacks over the last decade.

Philippe Vansteenkiste, lost his sister on 22 March 2016 when three coordinated suicide bombings occurred in Belgium, two at Brussels Airport in Zaventem, and one at the Maalbeek metro station in central Brussels. 32 people were killed and more than 300 people were injured. The so-called Da'esh terrorist organisation claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Philippe's sister, Fabienne, died during the attack at the airport. Previously an employee at the airport, Philippe co-founded and is the Director of Victims-Europe, Belgium, an international non-profit organization that seeks to defend the rights of victims of terrorism in Belgium. In an interview with UN Web TV he says it is important for families to share their experience of the impacts of terrorism. “When my sister died, I felt extremely lonely in our situation,” he said. “In the beginning you need time to adapt to this new situation to this new life. But then you need to find support communicate to understand to learn about yourself also.” <http://webtv.un.org/search/un-supporting-victims-of-terrorism-%E2%80%93-philippe-vansteenkiste-/5816257852001/?term=terrorism&sort=date>

An increasing number of countries around the world are today affected by terrorism. While Europe and the Nordic countries have experienced several attacks over the last decade, the number of victims is largely concentrated in a few countries. Last year, five countries - Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia and Sudan - accounted for nearly three quarters of all deaths caused by terrorism.

The UN has established an online support portal for individuals across the globe who are survivors of or affected by terrorism. You can find the portal and more information [here](#) .