Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
http://assembly.coe.int
1949.2019
COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 2303 (2019)[1]

Protecting and supporting the victims of terrorism

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly pays tribute to all victims killed, wounded and/or traumatised during terrorist attacks in several Council of Europe member States and worldwide.

2. In their counter-terrorism strategies, governments and parliaments must ensure that the victims of terrorist attacks are afforded adequate protection and support taking their specific physical, material, emotional and psychological needs into account, and that their dignity and human rights are fully upheld. Moreover, the right of all victims to truth, justice and reparation must be guaranteed.

3. The Assembly notes that a number of existing legal instruments have not been fully implemented and put in practice and stresses the need for a more consistent and systematic approach to protecting and supporting victims of terrorism throughout Council of Europe member States. It therefore calls on the member and observer States and States whose parliaments enjoy observer or partner for democracy status with the Assembly:

3.1. with regard to the recognition of "victims of terrorism", to:

3.1.1. grant them official recognition as a special category of victims in a universally agreed legal framework, thus acknowledging their suffering on behalf of the State against which the terrorist act was directed, identify their needs as distinct from those of victims of "ordinary" crimes, and facilitate access to support services, in particular for cross-border victims;

3.1.2. consider carrying out a census of all persons affected by an attack, regardless of their nationality and residence status, and inform them of their right of access to justice, the conditions of compensation and the existence of support services and organisations;

3.1.3. recognise the humanitarian, legal and strategic importance of providing prompt and effective support to victims at every stage of the recovery process to empower victims and minimise the harm at both the individual and societal level;

3.2. with regard to supporting victims of terrorism at the national level, to:

3.2.1. provide victims of terrorism with adequate urgent and long-term medical, psychological, material, legal and social assistance;

3.2.2. guarantee the right of victims of terrorism to fair restitution, reparation or compensation, without any income requirement and irrespective of their residence status or nationality, in the State where the attack took place, and apply it to members of their immediate family or beneficiaries of the direct victim;

3.2.3. ensure that a dedicated public body is responsible for catering to the needs of victims of terrorism through a comprehensive, compassionate and victim-centred approach;

3.2.4. create multilingual information services and material outlining national victim support services;

---

1. *Assembly debate* on 2 October 2019 (32nd Sitting) (see Doc. 14957, report of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, rapporteur: Ms Marietta Karamanli). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 2 October 2019 (32nd Sitting).
See also Recommendation 2164 (2019).

3.2.5. ensure that public bodies, agencies and social services, non-specific to victims of terrorism but with which victims of terrorism may interact, are properly funded and that their staff receive adequate and continuous training;

3.2.6. ensure co-ordination among relevant public bodies to minimise administrative burdens for victims, ensure consistency in the provision of services and maximise transparency;

3.2.7. pay attention to the specific needs of vulnerable groups of victims, such as cross-border victims, members of minorities, women, young people and children;

3.2.8. provide, where possible, opportunities for victims of terrorism to participate in criminal justice proceedings affecting them;

3.2.9. ensure that every effort is made to adequately protect victims from further harm, by the original perpetrators or those aligned with their cause, and from secondary victimisation, as a result of their interactions with the authorities;

3.2.10. uphold the dignity and privacy of the victims by making them aware of their rights with regard to the media and their right to control their privacy and their image, and by encouraging the press to uphold certain ethical standards and avoid degrading or sensationalist reporting, while respecting freedom of the press;

3.2.11. raise public awareness of the risks that social media can represent when they convey information about or images of a private and potentially shocking nature of the victims or the terrorist attacks;

3.2.12. consider the creation of humanitarian funds arising from dedicated appeals for donations or, at the very least, supervise their conditions and ensure their control, to ensure that funds raised by the public are used effectively and efficiently;

3.2.13. counteract terror narratives and various forms of incitement, in line with Assembly Resolution 2221 (2018) on counter-narratives to terrorism, through school programmes and awareness-raising campaigns, underlying the supreme values of human dignity, peace, non-violence, tolerance and human rights, and involve the victims of terrorist acts;

3.2.14. take appropriate measures to attain social recognition and remembrance of the victims, through museums, memorials and medals, for example;

3.3. with regard to supporting victims of terrorism in co-operation with civil society, to:

3.3.1. co-operate closely with civil society organisations, such as victims' associations, preferably through a clear formal agreement, on policy-making initiatives, awareness and fundraising campaigns, and research, education and training programmes;

3.3.2. assist civil society and, in particular, non-governmental organisations involved in providing support to the victims of terrorism to improve the delivery of justice-related services to support victims and their families and beneficiaries;

3.3.3. review how grants are awarded to and used by non-governmental organisations, consult them on their needs, and monitor and evaluate the support services provided on a continual basis to ensure an efficient and effective distribution of resources;

3.4. with regard to supporting victims of terrorism at the international level, to:

3.4.1. implement Article 13 of the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism (CETS No. 196) on "Protection, compensation and support for victims of terrorism";

3.4.2. implement the Revised Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers on the protection of victims of terrorist acts of 19 May 2017, on a proactive basis;

3.4.3. strengthen international co-operation not only to fight more effectively against terrorist organisations, but also to better share information between national compensation services, avoid situations of double compensation or non-compensation and co-ordinate assistance;

3.4.4. share good practice, experience and expertise, also through international organisations, to allow the international community to learn from the unique experience of certain States and thus support the training of victim support professionals;

3.4.5. prioritise the improvement of support for cross-border victims of terrorism in future reforms.

4. The Assembly invites the European Union to:

4.1. ensure that the European Union Centre of Expertise for Victims of Terrorism also embraces a pan-European dimension and co-ordinates its activities with the Council of Europe, also with a view to promoting the full implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism, its 2015 additional protocol (CETS No. 217) and the Revised Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers on the protection of victims of terrorist acts;

4.2. examine, in consultation with the Council of Europe, the possibility of adopting a European charter on the rights of the victims of terrorism to facilitate recognition, communication and co-ordination in greater Europe and thereby highlight the importance of rights and recognition of the status of victims of terrorism.

5. Finally, the Assembly believes that the survivors of terrorist attacks, along with former terrorists and foreign fighters, should be actively involved in all efforts to prevent radicalisation leading to violent extremism in all Council of Europe member States, and resolves to closely follow this matter in its future work.